

CAPTAIN MARRYAT AND THE OLD NAVY

By the same Author

FANNY BURNEY

"Graceful, genial and discerning"
Punch

5/- net

DEMOCRACY AND ITS RIVALS

AN INTRODUCTION TO MODERN
POLITICAL THEORIES

5/- net

School Edition 3/6

CAPTAIN MARRYAT AND THE OLD NAVY

By

CHRISTOPHER LLOYD

Author of

"FANNY BURNEY," "DEMOCRACY AND ITS RIVALS."

"I should like to disengage myself from the fraternity of authors,
and be known in future only in my profession as a good officer and
seaman."

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
LONDON + NEW YORK + TORONTO

CAPTAIN MARRYAT AND THE OLD NAVY

By

CHRISTOPHER LLOYD

Author of

"FANNY BURNEY," "DEMOCRACY AND ITS RIVALS."

"I should like to disengage myself from the fraternity of authors,
and be known in future only in my profession as a good officer and
seaman."

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
LONDON + NEW YORK + TORONTO

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO., LTD.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.4

17 CHITTARANJAN AVENUE, CALCUTTA

NICOL ROAD, BOMBAY

36A MOUNT ROAD, MADRAS

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

114 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

221 EAST 20TH STREET, CHICAGO

88 TREMONT STREET, BOSTON

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

215 VICTORIA STREET, TORONTO

First Published 1939

Printed in Great Britain
By the BURLEIGH PRESS, Lewin's Mead, BRISTOL

FOR
BRENDA

INTRODUCTION

“**H**E is the enslaver of youth, not by the false glamour of presentation, but by the heroic quality of his own unique temperament.” So wrote Conrad in admitting how Marryat inspired him with an early love for the sea. “His novels are not the outcome of his art, but of his character, like the deeds that make up his record of service. To the artist his work is interesting as a completely successful expression of an unartistic nature. It is absolutely amazing to us, as the disclosure of the spirit animating the stirring times when the nineteenth century was young. There is an air of fable about it. Its loss would be irreparable, like the curtailment of a national story or the loss of a historical document. It is the beginning of an inspiring tradition. Marryat is really a writer of the Service,” he continues. “What sets him apart is his fidelity. His pen serves his country as well as did his professional skill and his renowned courage. His figures move between water and sky, and the water and sky are there only to frame the deeds of the Service. . . . He loved his country first, the Service next, the sea perhaps not at all. But the sea loved him without reserve.”

Marryat the naval officer is the subject of this book. For most people the story of the Navy ends with the battle of Trafalgar and begins again in 1914. Even to naval historians the quarter of a century after Trafalgar is a trackless desert. My aim has been to explore,

INTRODUCTION

through the career of the man who was chiefly responsible for building up the priceless legend of the old Navy, the fascinating period which lies between 1806 and 1830.

Marryat joined the Navy the year after Trafalgar. He bore an active part in the final years of the struggle against Napoleon. He served throughout the American War. He was at St. Helena at the time of the death of Napoleon ; he was engaged against the smugglers in the Channel ; he wrote a pamphlet on the Press Gang ; and he commanded the naval forces during that forgotten but heroic expedition—the first Burmese War.

A career as varied as this throws light on almost every side of naval life. The only full biography of Marryat which has hitherto appeared is a typically pious Victorian production compiled by his daughter many years after his death. I have refrained from attempting to plumb the mysteries of his later life which that book leaves unsolved. Whilst merely sketching his last eighteen years when he won fame as a novelist, I have tried to fill up the very inadequate account of Marryat's naval career which has hitherto been available.

The life of a naval officer is the life of the ships he serves in. I make no apology for describing the adventurous cruises of the *Impérieuse*, because it was the memory of his career as a midshipman which provided Marryat with most of the material for the novels he wrote after his retirement from the service. Indeed, had he not been appointed to that particular frigate when he joined the Navy he might never have become a novelist. Of the 2,347 lieutenants on the list in 1806, the majority never saw an action. If Marryat's ex-

INTRODUCTION

perience had been as tame as theirs the loss to the literature of the sea would have been irreparable. In recent times he has been relegated to the nursery. But his best books can be read with equal pleasure early or late in life. He wrote too much and too fast, but he did produce more than one minor masterpiece. Conrad is right in saying that, with all his faults, "his greatness is undeniable."

I should like to thank all those who have helped me to write this book, particularly H. W. Hodges and G. E. Harvey, who have read the proofs, and E. H. W. Meyerstein, who most generously put at my disposal the result of many years study of the subject.

ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE,
DARTMOUTH. 1938.

CONTENTS

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|---|------|
| I. LONDON - - - - - | I |
| II. THE MIDSHIPMEN'S BERTH - - - | 11 |
| III. THE IMPÉRIEUSE - - - - - | 29 |
| IV. THE MEDITERRANEAN - - - - | 45 |
| V. OFF THE COAST OF SPAIN - - - | 65 |
| VI. THE BATTLE IN THE AIX ROADS - - | 86 |
| VII. WALCHEREN - - - - - | 115 |
| VIII. THE MEDITERRANEAN FLEET - - | 124 |
| IX. THE AMERICAN WAR—I. - - - | 137 |
| X. THE AMERICAN WAR—II. - - - | 149 |
| XI. SIGNALS AND THE PRESS GANG - - | 172 |
| XII. NAPOLEON AND THE SMUGGLERS - - | 189 |
| XIII. THE BURMESE WAR - - - - | 206 |
| XIV. THE LAST COMMAND - - - - | 232 |
| XV. THE NOVELIST - - - - - | 250 |
| APPENDIX: LIST OF SERVICES OF CAPTAIN MARRYAT | 276 |
| REFERENCES - - - - - | 277 |
| INDEX - - - - - | 283 |

ILLUSTRATIONS

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| FREDERICK MARRYAT. Portrait by Simpson in the National Portrait Gallery | - <i>Frontispiece</i> |
| | FACING PAGE |
| FITTING OUT. Engraving by Cruikshank after a sketch by Marryat | - - - - - 12 |
| THE MIDSHIPMEN'S BERTH. Engraving by Cruik- shank | - - - - - 24 |
| MASTHEADED. Engraving by Cruikshank after a sketch by Marryat | - - - - - 36 |
| THE POINT OF HONOUR. Engraving by Cruikshank | 132 |
| MR. BLOCKHEAD PROMOTED TO LIEUTENANT. Engraving by Cruikshank after a sketch by Marryat | - - - - - 152 |
| THE MORNING WATCH. Sketch by Marryat | - 152 |
| THE ATTACK ON DALA, showing the <i>Diana</i> steam vessel. From <i>25 Views of Rangoon</i> by Marryat and Moore | - - - - - 210 |
| THE WAITING ROOM AT THE ADMIRALTY. Cari- cature by Marryat. Marryat himself stands by the wall on the left with folded arms | 254 |

MAP

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| PLAN OF THE BATTLE IN THE AIX ROADS | - PAGE 90 |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|

CHAPTER I

LONDON

SCOTT.—We find people fond of being sailors.

JOHNSON.—I cannot account for that, any more than I can account for other strange perversions of the imagination.—(*April 10th, 1778*).

ON the afternoon of November 6th, 1805, Frederick Marryat was sitting at the back of a classroom in the school for young gentlemen kept by Mr. Freeman at Ponder's End. The door burst open and the dancing master—a rotund little man whom Marryat detested—bounced into the room. Lord Nelson had won a famous victory. The French and Spanish fleets had been destroyed off Cape Trafalgar. The lieutenant bearing the despatches had arrived in London that morning. But Nelson, the country's hero, had been killed in the hour of victory.

It was not till Christmas Eve that Nelson's body, preserved in a cask of spirits, was brought off the *Victory* to lie in state in the Painted Hall at Greenwich. Fifteen thousand people filed past the coffin there, and an equally large crowd watched the procession of boats which accompanied it up the river to Whitehall stairs on January 8th. At noon the next day the funeral procession moved off from the doors of the Admiralty, headed by a troop of Light Dragoons and four infantry regiments in scarlet coats and black shakos.

Joseph Marryat and his family had taken their

commission a difficulty arose about his baptismal certificate. Every candidate had to produce evidence that he was more than twenty years of age. For this purpose Midshipman Marryat presented a certificate from Dr. Williams' Circulating Library stating that Frederick Marryat, of the parish of All Hallows, Barking, was born on July 10th, 1792.

The captains who were holding the examination in Portsmouth Harbour were furious. A certificate from a Circulating Library! What next? Marryat hastened to explain that his parents were Dissenters and that therefore he had not been baptised according to the rites of the Anglican Church. "Damned dissenting nonsense!" they exclaimed. "No commission will be given you until we have laid the matter before the commissioners of the Navy Board." Midshipman Marryat, they wrote on October 10th, has "presented to us the inclosed affidavit, which in our opinion is not a regular and sufficient document. We request to be informed whether under the circumstances of Mr. Marryat's not being Christened according to the rules of the Established Church of England, a Certificate from the Registrar of a Circulating Library called Dr. Williams in Red Cross Street, Cripplegate, is to be considered sufficient and conformable to the regulations requisite to prove the age of such candidates, being in every other particular satisfied as to Mr. Marryat's abilities."

The Secretary of the Navy Board had little patience with the scruples of examining captains. There was a war on, and it was difficult enough to find officers and men without bothering about the rules of the Established Church or the King's Regulations. Without

commission a difficulty arose about his baptismal certificate. Every candidate had to produce evidence that he was more than twenty years of age. For this purpose Midshipman Marryat presented a certificate from Dr. Williams' Circulating Library stating that Frederick Marryat, of the parish of All Hallows, Barking, was born on July 10th, 1792.

The captains who were holding the examination in Portsmouth Harbour were furious. A certificate from a Circulating Library ! What next ? Marryat hastened to explain that his parents were Dissenters and that therefore he had not been baptised according to the rites of the Anglican Church. " Damned dissenting nonsense ! " they exclaimed. " No commission will be given you until we have laid the matter before the commissioners of the Navy Board." Midshipman Marryat, they wrote on October 10th, has " presented to us the inclosed affidavit, which in our opinion is not a regular and sufficient document. We request to be informed whether under the circumstances of Mr. Marryat's not being Christened according to the rules of the Established Church of England, a Certificate from the Registrar of a Circulating Library called Dr. Williams in Red Cross Street, Cripplegate, is to be considered sufficient and conformable to the regulations requisite to prove the age of such candidates, being in every other particular satisfied as to Mr. Marryat's abilities."

The Secretary of the Navy Board had little patience with the scruples of examining captains. There was a war on, and it was difficult enough to find officers and men without bothering about the rules of the Established Church or the King's Regulations. Without

hesitation he endorsed the captains' letter : " If they are satisfied that the Certificate produced is Authentic we see no Objection to its being Admitted."

Even this did not satisfy the captains. The fellow was probably one of those illegitimate sprigs of the nobility who were sent to sea to get them out of the way. They would have another affidavit before they granted him his commission. The next document that Marryat had to produce was an affidavit " sworn this 15th day of October, 1812, in the City of London " by his Uncle Samuel, Barrister-at-Law. This deponent maketh oath that he " was present at his baptismal Ceremony, which was performed by John Williams, Doctor of Laws, then a dissenting Clergyman, resident and officiating as such at Sydenham in the Parish of Lewisham in the County of Kent, where the Deponent's mother (the grandmother of the said Frederick Marryat) kept house and resided at that time." The deponent added that Joseph Marryat, Frederick's father, was then living at Catharine Court, Tower Hill.

This correspondence solves a problem with which the biographer of Marryat is faced at the start. In her life of her father, Marryat's daughter simply stated that he was born at Westminster. Many years later a correspondent to *Notes and Queries* added that Marryat was born at 6 Great George Street, Westminster. We know that the Marryats lived there in 1806 and perhaps earlier ; but Uncle Samuel's evidence proves that the novelist of the Old Navy was born within sight of the shipping in the Pool of London, and within a stone's throw of the Navy Office in Seething Lane which Mr. Pepys knew so well. Here in Catharine Court, on the site of the modern Port of London Authority,

and in Bridge Street, Blackfriars, to which his family moved when he was still a child, Frederick Marryat grew up.

The Marryats were Dissenters. They traced their ancestry back through a line of 'painful preachers' and polemical theologians to the founder of the Suffolk branch of the family, Sieur Thomas de Marriat, who fought for the Huguenots at Ivry. In 1610 he returned to England to marry a Puritan heiress of the name of Lake. The west country Marryats claimed descent from a Norman family which came over at the Conquest to acquire lands in Somerset, where hamlets such as Ashton Meryat still retain the name. They were not a particularly distinguished family ; but, as a result of repeated excommunications at the hands of the Bishops of Bath and Wells, they acquired a certain notoriety for their practice of disembowelling their dead wives and preserving their hearts in iron cases. It was, says an old chronicler, "a fancy peculiar to the knightly family of Meryat."

Of Frederick's grandfather, Thomas Marryat, we know little beyond the fact that he was an eccentric and erudite doctor. He published a work entitled *Therapeutics, or the Art of Healing*, but he never acquired the bedside manner. His patients complained that he was 'a perfect hedgehog to strangers and those whom he disliked.' He died the year Frederick was born. Of his widow, who lived at Sydenham till her death in 1803, there is a pleasant sketch in *The King's Own*, where her grandson describes his recall from school to attend her funeral and his uncle's eccentric behaviour on that occasion.

The firmness of the Dissenting character and a

physical courage above the ordinary were the characteristics Marryat inherited from his ancestors. Dissenters usually make money. Certainly Joseph Marryat made plenty. Unfortunately his son did not inherit the flair. If we were to judge from the way he talks about fathers in his novels we should call Joseph a bully and a skinflint. A grim, florid-complexioned man he certainly was ; but fortunately for his reputation, there are a number of handsome tributes to his memory from other sources. An old City friend corrects the misconception of him as a narrow-minded nonconformist, a hard, dry man of business, by calling him "a large minded and large hearted merchant prince." That is exactly the character given of him by his son's life-long friend, Edward Howard, in *Rattlin the Reefer*. A shrewd, generous, friendly man, Howard thought him ; one who did himself well yet never shirked his responsibilities. "He was one of those few merchant princes that was really in all things princely." But there was nothing adventurous in his character. He was to become Chairman of Lloyd's and Member for Sandwich for many years. He was also Colonial Agent for the islands of Trinidad and Grenada, where he owned large plantations. As his pamphlet on slavery shows, there was some conflict between his conscience and his pocket about the problem of emancipation. He was agreeable to the abolition of the slave trade, but neither he nor his son welcomed the emancipation of the negroes if it meant that the planters would suffer. He was apprehensive of what actually occurred after his death—the decline in the value of West Indian property. It was this (together with his habitual extravagance) which kept Frederick Marryat a poor man,

whereas his father had been exceptionally rich. Joseph was too busy making a fortune to worry much about the welfare of his children while they were young. As his obituary notice says, "his great aim through life was to attain the proud distinction of being a truly British merchant."

There was little in common between this respectable, worldly-wise gentleman and his boisterous son. Frederick took after his mother, an American Loyalist of the name of Van Geyer, whom his father married in 1788. She was a clever woman, resolute, witty, quick-tempered. Marryat's toughness of fibre, his pride, his unruly temper and his quick sense of humour were certainly hers. And his letters to her throughout his life (she outlived him by six years) shows that she alone, and neither his father nor his wife, ever really understood him and claimed his deepest affection.

Joseph and Charlotte had an enormous family. Ten children survived of the fifteen born to them. Joseph, the eldest, was born in Grenada before his parents returned to settle in London. From the first it was decided that he should follow in his father's footsteps. Everything was sacrificed to him, with the result that Frederick came to detest his elder brother. Joseph went to Oxford, Joseph had more pocket money, Joseph wore the best clothes.

It was this last point, with which every younger brother will sympathise, and which gives evidence of a certain parsimony on the part of his parents, that drove the ten-year-old Frederick to desperate measures. He hated Holmwood School, with its iron gates, its flogging and spying and bullying. He hated the daily washing of hands and face, 'and perhaps the neck.'

Worse than this, worse even than the brimstone purgative on Monday mornings, was the humiliation of having to wear Joseph's cast-off clothes. He would run away.

And run away he did ; not once, but again and again. He led the wretched ushers a terrible dance. Once, when they had recaptured him a mile from the school, he slipped from their clutches to take refuge in the middle of an ice-cold pond. His captors danced with rage upon the bank, threatening to flay the skin off his back if he did not come out immediately. Only when they began to pull off their shoes and stockings did he condescend to surrender. After another of these attempts had ended in a similar manner his father gave him some money and put him into a hackney cab to return to school. The cab arrived, but without Marryat. Late that evening he was discovered enjoying himself hugely in the company of numerous brothers and sisters at a pantomime. He had escaped through the outside door of the cab into the street and treated the others with the money his father had given him.

One can sympathise with the dislike with which Mr. Freeman regarded him. He was a clever boy, but idle; quick to pick up knowledge when he liked, but forgetting it again just as easily. A strong, good-looking lad with a humorous mouth and a dimpled chin, he had the Cockney's cheeky upturned nose and the Cockney's taste for outrageous practical jokes. One of his school fellows was Babbage, later famous for his mechanical calculator. He and another studious youth made a practice of getting up at three in the morning to work surreptitiously. Marryat hated that sort of

thing, but the possibility of doing something forbidden, even if it was to do something he disliked, was too attractive. After a period of private warfare he forced Babbage to allow him to join the circle which met before dawn. That was the end of study. Marryat soon turned the schoolroom into a bear garden and even let off fireworks to wake the house. Another time, when he was supposed to be doing his preparation, Mr. Freeman discovered him standing on his head with a book propped before his eyes. Asked what he meant by this extraordinary behaviour he replied : “ Well ! I’ve been trying for three hours to learn it on my feet, but I couldn’t, so I thought I would try whether it would be easier to learn it on my head.”

It was always to sea that he wished to run away. There was nothing in his ancestry, or, indeed, in the Navy of that period, which could have attracted him in that direction. But to one brought up within sight of the spars and masts of the shipping in London Pool, who had watched barrels and casks unloaded from the Indiamen, and had heard his father’s talk of wrecks and convoys and privateers, the call of the sea must have been strong. He had no idea what peace meant, for he was born in the year war was declared against France. The great victories which echoed down the years of his boyhood—Camperdown and Copenhagen, St. Vincent and the Nile—culminating in Trafalgar and the spectacle of Nelson’s funeral, inspired him with the prospect of a glorious career. Only by joining the Navy could he escape the tyranny of school.

“ Every high-spirited boy wishes to go to sea—it’s quite natural ; but if the most of them were to speak the truth it is not that they so much want to go to sea,

as that they want to go from school or from home, where they are under the control of their masters or parents."

"Very true, Ready ; they wish to be, as they consider they will be, independent."

"And a pretty mistake they make of it, sir. Why, there is not a greater slave in the world than a boy who goes to sea, for the first few years after his shipping ; for once they are corrected on shore, they are punished ten times at sea, and they never again meet with the love and affection they have left behind them. It is a hard life, and there have been few who have not bitterly repented it."

There speaks 'the enchanter of youth,' the man who has so often been accused of tempting boys away to sea by the false glamour of his art.

Soon after the memorable day of Nelson's funeral, Joseph Marryat removed his son from the school at Ponder's End and sent him to a tutor. The boy so obviously hated school, and Freeman's tyranny really did seem to bring out the worst in him, that even Joseph thought a change would be good for him. But if it was easy to run away from school, it was doubly easy to run away from a private tutor. This time Joseph did not stop to argue with his son. He was fourteen years old, an age when boys were usually sent to sea. The family was increasing annually and the boy was of the unruly type which makes neither a scholar nor a business man. To sea he should go. So, with his usual carefulness, Joseph set about finding him a suitable ship.

CHAPTER II

THE MIDSHIPMEN'S BERTH

Hark to the Boatswain's call, the cheering cry !
While through the seaman's hand the tackle glides ;
Or schoolboy Midshipman that, standing by,
Strains his shrill pipe as good or ill betides,
And well the docile crew that skilful urchin guides.

BYRON, *Childe Harold*.

IN the year 1806 a boy in Marryat's position could either go to sea direct by joining a ship as a First Class Volunteer, or he could go to the Royal Naval College, Portsmouth. If he was sent to the latter (in which case an official nomination was necessary) he would not go to sea until he was seventeen. If Joseph Marryat could secure a place in a good ship for his fourteen-year-old son he would not have to worry himself further about the boy's future. That would be one distraction less from his real business in life—making a fortune in the City.

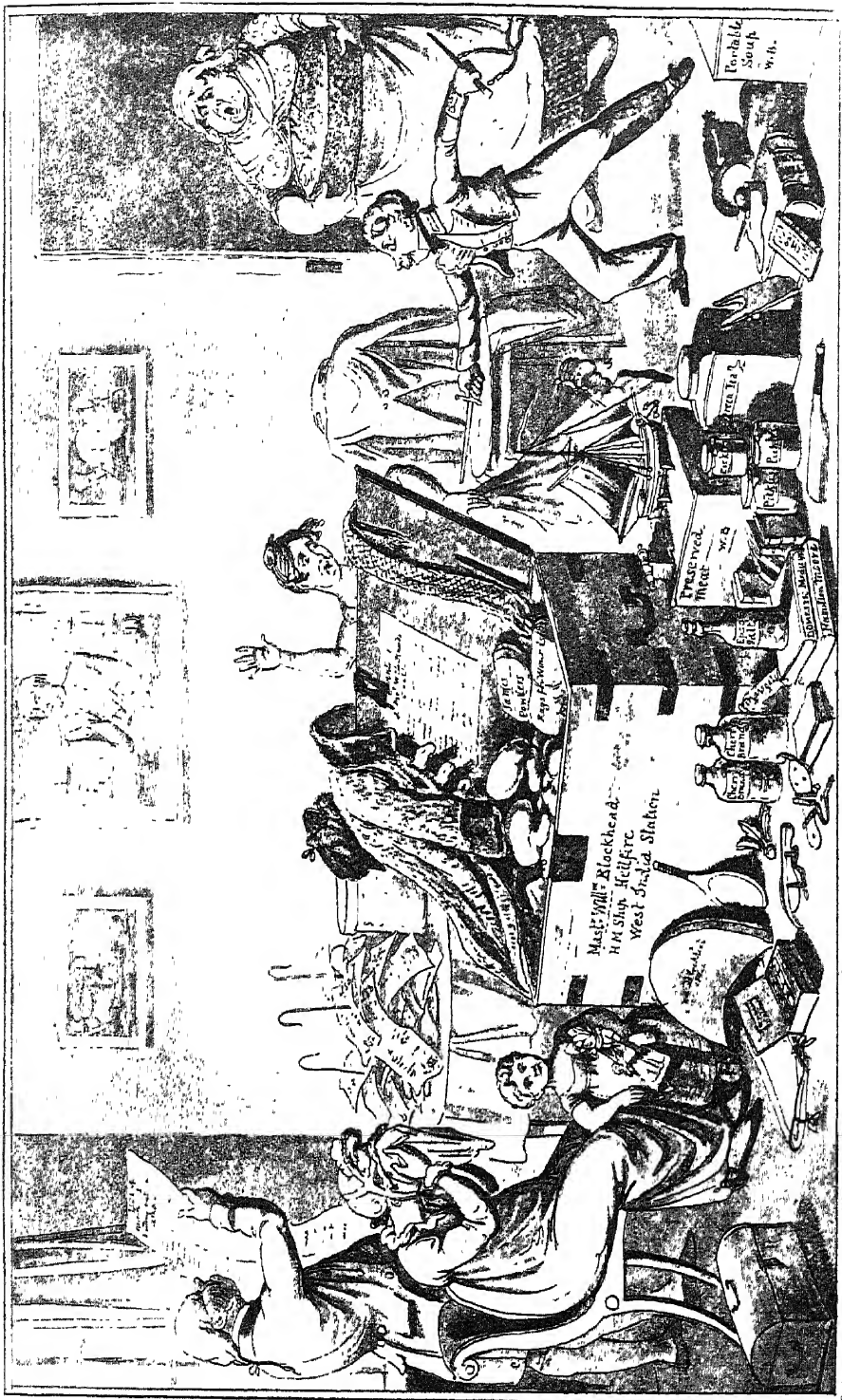
That summer Lord Cochrane was in London. He had just paid off his ship, the *Pallas* frigate, and become a Member of Parliament. At Westminster, where the Marryats were now living, it is probable that Joseph Marryat made his acquaintance. By this stage of the war the work of Lloyd's and that of the Navy were closely related. Everybody at Lloyd's was talking about the £75,000 fortune which Cochrane was reported to have won in prize money on his last cruise. The

chance of getting a son into a ship commanded by such a man was too good to be missed.

Lloyd's was popular in Service circles because it organised benevolent Patriotic Funds to be distributed in the form of rewards or pensions on the occasion of great naval victories. In the winter of 1805 the biggest of these funds, the Trafalgar Fund, was organised by Joseph Marryat and three other leading subscribers. That he should have been appointed chairman of this committee shows that he had already secured for himself an important position at Lloyd's. The object of the Patriotic Fund is explained in an unpublished letter from him to Lord Liverpool on December 19th, 1805 :

At this crisis, to animate the brave men engaged in the defence of their country, this institution was founded, on the comprehensive scale of providing for the widows and orphans of those who fall, of assuaging the anguish of those who are wounded, and of rewarding those who distinguish themselves in his Majesty's service on every occasion whatever ; and we are happy in saying that, extensive as the provisions of this plan are, they promise to find ample resources in the public spirit and liberality of the British nation. Since the enemy has given his Majesty's fleet the opportunity they had so long and ardently desired, and of which they have so gloriously availed themselves, of bringing his naval force into action, the benefits of this institution have been much more widely diffused.

The Admiralty did not look with favour upon this method of rewarding those in the Service by private subscription ; nor did they approve of the habit contracted by captains like Cochrane of sending news about the movements of convoys direct to Lloyd's. But officers and men on active service had good reason to be grateful for such benevolent activities ; it is well known that only a minute proportion of those who



Portable
Soup
w. B.

Messrs. Wm. Blackhead
H.M. Ship, Belfast
West Street, Glasgow

fought at Trafalgar ever received any official reward whatever.

Thomas, Lord Cochrane, tenth Earl of Dundonald, was at that date a man of thirty-one. An engraving of him as Captain of the *Impérieuse* gives an admirable idea of his powerful physique, his curiously theatrical character and his first-rate fighting qualities. He stands with his hand tucked into the breast of his coat and one elegant foot on the carriage of a gun, against a background of the rigging of his frigate, half obscured by the smoke of battle; the perfect image of a fighting captain in the prime of manhood, well over six foot tall, with a fine handsome head and a nose like a ship's rudder. He was of the buccaneer type, not that of an admiral of the fleet. No career in British naval history is as romantic as his, for he loved to perform his exploits in the melodramatic style peculiar to his character. No frigate captain fought so many brilliant single ship actions with such an astounding success. And no officer ever made himself as unpopular in official circles as Cochrane did by those very qualities which made him such a first-rate fighting man. He was too much of an individualist ever to become a successful Service officer.

He had won fame in 1801 when, as captain of the sloop *Speedy* ('a burlesque on a vessel of war'), he captured the Spanish frigate *El Gamo*. The *Speedy* carried fourteen 'pop-guns' and a crew of fifty-four. The weight of her broadside was 28 lbs., as compared with *El Gamo's* 190 lbs. The captain's cabin was so small that he had to open a skylight and prop a mirror on the deck if he wanted to stand up to shave. When he encountered *El Gamo* off Barcelona he ran his little

ship alongside, locked his yards with the Spaniard's and led a boarding party with faces blackened with tar to strike terror into their superstitious foe. He captured the frigate with the loss of three men, and sailed her back to Gibraltar with two hundred and sixty-three prisoners under the hatches. Subsequently, as captain of the *Pallas*, he captured the *Minerve* frigate in equally gallant style, and ended a brilliant cruise by sailing his ship into Plymouth Sound with three golden candlesticks lashed to the mast heads.

When he had paid off the *Pallas* in the spring of 1806, Cochrane decided to attack the Government instead of the French. His election for Honiton cost him £1,000, but his vanity was rewarded by the sensation caused by the election of a naval officer in the Radical interest. He conducted his campaign with typical bravura, setting out from Plymouth, as a newspaper reports, "in true seamanlike style, accompanied by two lieutenants and a midshipman in full dress in one carriage, followed by another containing the boat's crew, new rigged and prepared for action." In the interests of the country, the Service, and not least, himself, he determined on revenge for the treatment he had received. He would unmask the notoriously corrupt administration of the Navy Board with facts drawn from his own experience. He was not the sort of man to appreciate the irony of Captain Glascock's maxim for naval officers in Parliament: "on nautical topics observe a passive and dignified silence. The discussion of naval affairs and maritime matters to be left solely to landmen."

In the House of Commons he took the first opportunity to rake the naval administration fore and aft.

The nation was told a few unpleasant facts about the state of the dockyards in time of war, the peculations of the Victuallers' Board, the treatment of seamen in hospitals and the scandalous methods employed in fitting out ships to fight the French. Vested interests could not permit further exposures, so pressure was soon brought to bear to silence the noble lord. Government placemen were put up to point out, with some acrimony, that the duties of a naval officer in time of war lay at sea and not on the benches at Westminster. In a remarkably short time it was discovered that the *Impérieuse* frigate was fitting out at Plymouth. Cochrane was at once appointed to her, and in August he went down to take over the command. Before he went he promised Joseph Marryat that he would take Frederick into the ship as a Volunteer.

To serve under such a captain was the greatest piece of good fortune imaginable. At that date a captain's authority on board his ship was, in practice, absolute. He was a god afloat. On a station like the West Indies the Admiralty could not even exercise remote control over his activities. There was no uniformity about the interpretation of Mr. Easy's favourite reading—the Articles of War; the dress of the men, and even the appearance of the ship, varied with the whims of her commander. One, because his ship was called *Harlequin*, dressed his boat's crew as if they had signed on to appear in a pantomime. Others invariably flogged the last man down from the rigging or the last up the hatchway. Some kept their wives on board, others preferred pigs. The array of eccentric captains in the pages of Marryat's novels gives some idea of the diversity of character to be met

with in the ships of Old Navy. A young gentleman volunteer might find himself at the age of thirteen under a bestial sot who loved to watch the bo'sun flog the flesh off a man's back for spitting on the deck—'By God he would show them who was captain, he would see the fellow's backbone, by God !' Or he might find himself under some sprig of the nobility who knew less about working the ship than did the young gentleman himself. The most frequent type to be met with at this date was the yachtsman who paid more attention to the whiteness of the decks and the polish on the brasswork than to the efficiency of his gun crews. The average, of course, was high, far higher than in the days of Smollett and Vernon. Under the command of a Nelson or a Collingwood a fine sense of duty prevailed, because in those days the personal factor counted for even more than it does to-day.

From the point of view of those who served under him there could be no finer officer than Cochrane. He combined energy and audacity in attack with a scrupulous regard for the safety of his men. Every operation he planned, says Marryat, ensured the maximum of safety. "I never knew any one so careful of the lives of his ship's company as Lord Cochrane, or any who calculated so closely the risks attending any expedition. Many of the most brilliant achievements were performed without the loss of a single life, so well did he calculate the chances ; and one half the merit he deserves for what he did accomplish has never been awarded him, merely because, in the official despatches, there has not been a long list of killed and wounded, to please the appetite of the

English public." Marryat and many others complain of this strange taste for blood. "John Bull," he says elsewhere, "imagines that no action can be well fought unless there is considerable loss. Having no other method of judging the merits of an action, he appreciates it according to the list of killed and wounded." But it is easy to appreciate the admiration conceived for such a dashing sort of fellow in the hearts of his midshipmen. This hero-worship shines out in such characters as Captain Savage in *Peter Simple*, Captain M—— in *The King's Own*, and the captain of Mildmay's first ship. They are not portraits of Cochrane, because Marryat was far too young to appreciate the complexities of that baffling character, but they illustrate the qualities which endeared him to his subordinates.

The most convincing testimony to Cochrane's powers of leadership is afforded by the fact that when the *Impérieuse* was commissioned every member of the crew of the *Pallas* 'turned over' to her. A bad captain found it impossible to man a ship without recourse to the press gang. Once a ship had been paid off her crew were free (in theory) to go where they pleased ; they even ceased to be members of the Navy. Needless to say the organisation of impressment was so efficient at this stage of the war that they did not remain free agents for long. But only once, when he was still a young commander, did Cochrane have recourse to impressment. As the *Impérieuse* was a bigger ship than the *Pallas* there were a few vacancies to be filled. All Cochrane had to do was to post an advertisement on the walls of the dockyard :

WANTED. Stout, able bodied men who can run a quarter of a mile without stopping with a sackful of Spanish dollars on their backs.

Cochrane's discipline was strict, but seamen liked to serve under a man who was 'a bit of a Tartar,' provided his punishments were just. And officers preferred a man of birth, for at least 'their rebukes are generally better worded, and convey more to a man of feeling than the boisterous intemperance of a mushroom officer.'

There was not a ship afloat which offered such advantages as the *Impérieuse*. Frigate service was always preferable to that on board a ship of the line. Midshipmen of the great 'seventy-fours' might despise their fellow reefers on board the frigates; that was the tradition. But every tarrybrecks and every young gentleman preferred a frigate. This was especially the case after Trafalgar. The duties of a ship of the line for the last ten years of the war were the dulllest imaginable. Week in, week out, in every weather, the blockading squadrons sailed up and down outside Brest and Rochefort and Toulon. Marryat himself was to experience that sort of life, but he never served more than a year in a line of battle ship. Hence his books are almost invariably about life on board a frigate, a gun brig or a sloop. As there was not a single fleet action in the classic style after 1805, the fighting he describes is the sort he himself experienced in smaller ships—frigate actions, boardings, surprise landings, cuttings out and the like. It was fortunate that such had been his own experience, for such actions alone are amenable to description. No writer can give an adequate impression of the flaming, smoke-shadowed

tumult of titanic clashes between sixty great ships of the line.

Frigate service was popular because there was the prospect of plenty of fighting. Under Cochrane that hope became a certainty. Of course no sensible man ever liked fighting for its own sake. What every member of the crew, from first lieutenant to powder boy, looked forward to was the excitement of the chase, the chance of prize money and the opportunity for promotion. "Whatever may be the ideas of modern statesmen," wrote Cochrane, "prize money formed then, as it will ever form, the principal motive of seamen to encounter the perils of war." Nobody ever captured so many prizes in so short a time as he did. Had it not been for the jobbery in the Admiralty Prize Courts, even the boys in the waist of the ship would have come home with their pockets stuffed with gold. In 1808 a Royal Proclamation defined the distribution of prize money as follows : to the captain two-eighths ; to the officers two-eighths ; the remaining four-eighths to be distributed among the rest of the crew, every midshipman receiving four half-shares and the volunteers half a share each. In *Percival Keene*, Marryat gives £7,400 as the value of five prizes taken by a frigate ; of that the leading warrant officer received £1,500. No wonder he says that in those days "sailors going into action always begin to reckon what their share of prize money may be, before a shot is fired."

As soon as he heard that Cochrane had been appointed to a ship, Joseph Marryat sent his son to be fitted out at the tailors. A sea chest was bought and filled with gear : frilled shirts and black silk handkerchiefs, silk stockings, buckled shoes, and breeches

of white nankeen ; for working rig, a round jacket and a little glazed top-hat like a bishop's ; for full dress uniform, a blue-tailed coat lined with white silk, a cocked hat with a huge cockade at the side totally disproportionate to the size of the wearer, and a dirk with plenty of gold on the scabbard. The author of *The Young Naval Hero : or Hints to Parents*, a sort of Gieves handbook for 1807, estimates the cost of the outfit at £100 ; uniform, 5 guineas ; dirk with belt, one pound eleven and sixpence ; two blue round jackets, two pounds ten ; two round hats, one pound fifteen ; shoes, trousers, six towels, pillow cases and blankets, a sea chest, books on navigation and a volume in which a midshipman must keep his private log. Parts of Marryat's log are still in existence ; his dirk, which was in the cabin of his grandson, Fleet Surgeon H. L. Morris, went down with the *Indefatigable* at Jutland.

With a heart swelling with pride the young naval hero climbed into the Exeter coach on the morning of September 20th, 1806. Infant sisters and even his elder brother Joseph gaped with envy. His mother, poor woman, was the only person to spoil the scene. As for Frederick, he had no apprehensions as to what might happen once he got to sea. It was enough for him to know that at last he was going.

Arriving at Plymouth on the twenty-second, his first duty was to wait on Lord Cochrane at the Crown, or perhaps the George, 'the resort of all the naval aristocracy, and directly opposite the admiral's office.' No good captain lived on board his ship longer than was necessary ; if he did so it meant that he had fitted out his cabin for comfort, not fighting. Frederick

Marryat was in a more humble frame of mind than when he left London. Cocked hats were nothing new at Plymouth. The townspeople—worse still, the women on the Hoe—were not in the least impressed by the arrival of still another reefer in their midst. With some trepidation he enquired after Lord Cochrane. Making his lowest bow as he entered the room, he found himself being scrutinised by a tall, handsome man, younger than he had expected and speaking with a strong Scottish accent. The captain's manner was reassuring, but etiquette forbade undue familiarity with subordinates. As he ran his eye over the boy he noted the sturdy build, the intelligent eyes set in so curiously large a head, the humorous mouth and the pleasant dimple of the cleft chin. Satisfied with his appearance and the cut of his uniform, he told the boy to report on board as soon as possible. The first lieutenant, Mr. Sam Brown, would enter his name on the books. When he had done that, and had stowed his gear, he might return to the inn to dine.

At the sally port there were boats to be hired, or the ship's cutter might be alongside to row the young gentleman and his sea chest out to the *Impérieuse*. In those days the Hamoaze was an open bay, for the breakwater was not built on the reef till 1812. It was far too dangerous an anchorage for the fleet, for which reason big ships preferred Tor Bay. The *Impérieuse*, however, was fitting out up the river. The boatman pointed her out, surrounded by tenders and bumboats of every description. With some swearing and jostling they came alongside and Marryat clambered up the accommodation ladder. The midshipman of

the watch took charge of him and led him across a deck strewn with coils of rope and spars and casks. Caulkers and carpenters hammered and sawed around them. Burly, pigtailed seamen in filthy slops hauled and shouted down the hatchways. On the quarter deck the first lieutenant was standing, superintending the stowage of butts of water and barrels of provisions. Marryat saluted. His name was entered on the books and a midshipman told off to take him below and show him where to sling his hammock.

‘I followed my new friend down the ladder, under the half deck, where sat a woman, selling bread and butter and red herrings to the sailors ; she had also cherries and clotted cream, and a cask of strong beer, which seemed to be in great demand. We passed her, and descended another ladder, which brought us to the ’tween decks, and into the steerage, in the fore-part of which, on the larboard side, abreast of the main-mast, was my future residence—a small hole, which they called a berth ; it was ten feet long by six, and about five feet four inches high ; a small aperture, about nine inches square, admitted a very scanty portion of that which we most needed, namely fresh air and daylight. A deal table occupied a considerable extent of this small apartment, and on it stood a brass candlestick, with a dip candle, and a wick like a full blown carnation. The table cloth was spread and the stains of port wine and gravy too visibly indicated the near approach of Sunday. The black servant was preparing for dinner, and I was shown the seat I was to occupy. “Good heaven !” thought I, as I squeezed myself between the ship’s side and the mess-table, “and is this to be my future residence ?—better

go back to school ; there, at least, there is fresh air and clean linen." "

Such was Frank Mildmay's introduction to the midshipmen's berth. We have no hesitation in drawing on the details of that unpleasant young gentleman's career because, as Marryat admitted, the book is definitely autobiographical in incident, if not in character. 'Except the hero and the heroine and those parts of the work which supply the slight plot of it, as a novel the work is materially true, especially in the narrative of sea adventure, most of which did (to the best of our recollection) occur to the author.' Slight inaccuracies in the sequence of events may be put down to lapses of memory, but by checking his story from sources such as the ship's log or Cochrane's autobiography, and by comparing his picture of life on board with those provided in *Peter Simple*, for instance, or *Rattlin the Reefer*, or Chamier's *Life of a Sailor*, we have no hesitation in saying that in *Frank Mildmay* we have a veracious picture of Marryat's early career.

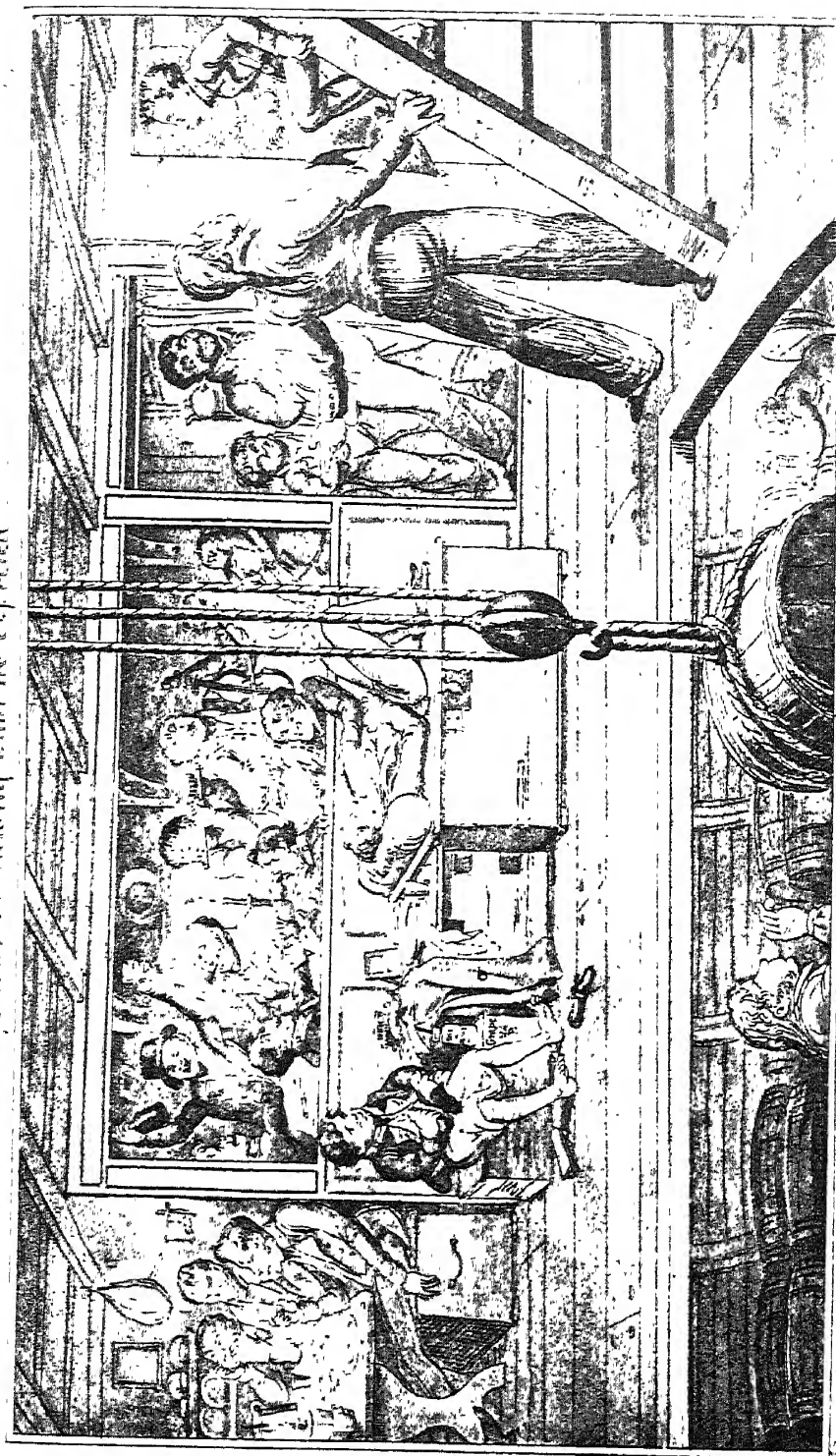
Marryat's description of the midshipmen's berth, the fetid cockpit below the waterline on the orlop deck, is the fullest and most convincing of all the accounts of Johnny Newcome's introduction to the Navy. It is to a drawing of his, too, that we are indebted for one of the few contemporary sketches of what that berth was like. In 1820 he did a series of wash drawings now in the British Museum, from which Cruikshank engraved a set of eight caricatures entitled *The Life of a Midshipman, or The Life of Mr. Blockhead*. A comparison with a portrait by Count d'Orsay makes it possible to identify the hero with the upturned nose with Marryat himself. Of the eleven drawings he did, Cruikshank only used

four in the published series ; but it is certain that Marryat helped him with the others and provided the subtitles.

In the picture here reproduced the infant Blockhead is being introduced to the berth by just such a one as Mr. Trotter in *Peter Simple*, and one can see the prototype of black Mesty lurking in the corner. The berth is slightly larger than that in the *Impérieuse*, and, instead of the usual dirty sailcloth screen, a wooden partition divides the oldsters from the youngsters. Grey haired midshipmen—disappointed men who had never risen to the rank of lieutenant or master's mate—messed together with the youngsters, seated on lockers or sea chests at a table which served for the surgeon's operations after an action. Only long acquaintance with its dirty surface enabled a midshipman to distinguish which stain was gravy and which was blood. After dinner a fork stuck in the beam was the signal for the 'squeakers' to retire ; the partition cloth was rigged and hammocks hung, the space officially allowed for each hammock being fourteen inches. In the foreground of the picture a tackle hangs over the hatchway into the well of the ship, where the stores were kept. Thence arises a musty odour compounded of tar and hemp and sailcloth, whiffs of salt pork, cheese and rancid butter. Predominating all these smells is the stench of the bilge, which sloshes with every roll of the ship. We can appreciate the horror with which Marryat first sniffed that fetid atmosphere.

His friend Howard catalogues the furniture of the berth as follows : ' One battered, spoutless, handleless japanned tin jug that did not contain water, for it leaked ; some tin mugs ; seven or eight pewter plates ;

FIGURE 2. Putting it into a box, exactly what the expert



THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

an excellent old iron tureen which contained our cocoa in the morning, our pea soup at noon and performed the character of wash basin whenever the midshipman's fag condescended to cleanse his hands. It is a fact that when we sailed from England, of crockery ware we had not a single article. We had no other provisions than the ship's allowance. Bread, it is well remarked, is the staff of life ; but it is not quite so pleasant to find it life itself, and to have the powers of locomotion.' Developing this theme, Admiral Raigersfeld remembers the day when 'the biscuit that was served to the ship's company was so light that when you tapped it upon the table, it fell almost into dust and thereout numerous insects called weevils, crawled ; they were bitter to the taste and a sure indication that the biscuit had lost its nutritious particles ; if, instead of these weevils, large maggots with black heads made their appearance, then the biscuit was considered to be only in the first stage of decay ; these maggots were fat and cold to the taste, but not bitter.' Bargemen, they were called, and it became second nature to a sailor to tap a biscuit on the table before putting it into his mouth. In port fresh food and vegetables from the bumboats were plentiful, and in a cruising frigate, which picked up a coasting vessel or two every week, food seldom became a serious question. But for a long voyage at sea the staple diet was burgoo or skillygolee (a gruel of mashed biscuit and gobbets of salt horse supposed to correct 'acid and costive humours'), dog's body (squashed peas), biscuits and salt junk. Living nearest the purser's stores midshipmen had the first option on rats, which were sometimes skinned and laid out as on a butcher's slab for the highest bidder. Fresh water turned green

in the casks before the ship had been at sea a couple of months ; Rosario or Mistala (Miss Taylor to the lower deck) was the usual drink. And there was always rum. Indeed, at the beginning of the last century a sailor's diet is best described as biscuits and rum. Occasionally, very occasionally, on account of the etiquette which confined a captain in lonely splendour to his cabin, a midshipman would be honoured with an invitation to dinner.

"The Captain's compliments to Mr. Marryat, and would be glad of his company to dinner."

"Mr. Marryat's compliments to the Captain and will be most happy to wait on him."

The *Impérieuse* did not sail for a month and more after Marryat had joined. During those weeks many illusions about life on board ship were shattered. To descend to the orlop deck he would have to pass the main deck where the seamen messed and where the woodwork was coloured red, so that bloodstains would not spoil the paintwork. In port the scene on that deck must have been one of incredible squalor. When fitting out a ship no attempt was made at the customary cleanliness or order. Discipline was relaxed to the extent of permitting sailors to entertain their 'wives' on board. The women were searched as they came over the side to prevent them bringing spirits on board. None the less plenty of liquor found its way below. With sailors carousing, rum flowing and women on board, the scene below decks was an obscene compound of gin lane and the stews.

The duties of a boy just joined were confined to running messages for the lieutenant of the watch. During his first few years at sea he would mix with the

crew rather than with his senior officers, particularly with the gunner and the bo'sun's mates like the admirable Mr. Chucks or the less admirable Mr. Biggs. Under their tutelage he learnt to distinguish the motley crew : the forecastle men and topmen, true tarrybrecks bred to the sea ; the afterguard who fought the ship ; the waisters, ' men without art of judgment,' the scourings of the ports provided by the press gang. ' Them were the chaps,' complains an Able Seaman, ' as played hell with the fleet—every finger was fairly a fish hook, neither chest nor bed, nor blanket, nor bag escaped their sleight o' hand thievery ; they pluck you, aye, as clean as a poulterer, and bone your very eyebrows whilst staring you full in the face.' Nelson used to say, " Aft the most honour, forward the better man." Yet the topmen were the hardest treated, for smartness aloft was a point of honour in every ship. Up to the topmast head in twelve minutes and all sail set in half an hour was the rule in a crack frigate. Thus it was the topman, in spite of all his skill and agility, who was most frequently ' started ' with the bosun's rattan or rope's end. He was the man who pulled on his jacket without a grimace after three dozen lashes at the gratings. Lastly, standing apart from these and generally unpopular because they acted as the ship's police, were the red coated marines, the ' jollies ' or the ' guffies,' as the seamen called them.

To a newcomer life on board must have appeared like a fantastic scene from another and more barbaric world. In those days seamen mixed little with landmen ; they were an unknown race. Moving about the deck with a rolling gait, clad in strange slops of many patterns, talking an incomprehensible language, those

tough, simian creatures must have been terrifying company for a lad of fourteen. They were a race apart from ordinary human beings, and they were treated like beasts. In the perfection of his language we are apt to forget the brutality of even such a worthy person as Gentleman Chucks, the bo'sun's mate :

Allow me to observe, my dear man, in the most delicate way in the world, that you are spilling the tar upon the deck—a deck, sir, if I may venture to make the observation, I had the duty of seeing holystoned this morning. You understand me, sir, you have defiled his Majesty's forecastle. I must do my duty, sir, if you neglect your's; so take that—and that—and that—(thrashing the man with his rattan)—you damned hay-making son of a sea cook. Do it again, damn your eyes, and I'll cut your liver out!

A midshipman's authority over the men was as absolute as that of any other officer. He cursed them with shrill obscenities. He could order a greyhaired seaman a dozen lashes for a grimace or a gesture. “By the God of War,” roared Sir Peter Parker, “by the God of War, I'll make you touch your hats to a midshipman's coat if it's only hung on a broomstick to dry!”

But before he could pipe out his orders he must learn to run aloft with the agility of a monkey, to scale the rigging of the towering masts from futtock shrouds to main royal top. He must learn the stays, shrouds, braces, how to ship the carronades on their slides and lash the gun carriages securely, how to hand and reef, read the compass and master the signal code. No wonder officers used to complain that there was no such thing as a perfect midshipman. For all this he was rewarded with more kicks than ha'pence, and with quarters which, as Mr. Easy found to his dismay, were ‘infinitely inferior to the dog kennels which received his father's pointers.’

CHAPTER III

THE IMPÉRIEUSE

You have sent the ship in a gale to work,
On a lee shore to be jammed ;
I'll give you a piece of my mind, old Turk :
Port Admiral, you be damned !

MARRYAT, *Snarleyvow*.

THE *Impérieuse* was a 38-gun frigate of 1,046 tons. She was one of the fastest sailing ships of her class, a crack frigate with a fine crew. Originally rated as a 40-gun ship called the *Medea*, she had been captured from the Spaniards in 1804 during an attack on a treasure fleet carrying gold ingots and seal skins worth a million pounds sterling.* The Muster Book for September 22nd, 1806, shows a complement of 284 men, including a ship's company of 160 and 35 marines. We shall hear more of her officers, of whom more than one lives in the pages of Marryat's novels. Her first lieutenant on this cruise was Mr. Sam Brown, second lieutenant David Mapleton, and third lieutenant Richard Harrison, who kept the Captain's log. The lieutenant of marines was John Hoare and the Purser Mr. Marsden. Possibly the original of Mr. Chucks was Thomas Knight, boatswain, or John Prince the boatswain's mate. Then there was the surgeon and

* This ship should not be confused, as she is in *Naval Chronicle*, xxi. 12, with *La Medée*, captured in 1800 but not purchased for the Navy. Nor with the *Impérieuse*, captured in 1793, which was re-named *Unité*.

his young assistant, Mr. Gilbert, who preferred landing parties to surgical operations; Mr. Lodovick the carpenter, Mr. Burney the gunner and Mr. Darby the schoolmaster. There were three midshipmen, fifteen Boys of the Second and Third Class who acted as servants or powder monkeys, and two Volunteers of the First Class: Sam Edwards, aged 13, and Frederick Marryat, aged 14.

On the morning of November 16th, Captain Cochrane came on board. The marines presented arms; the bo'sun by the gangway 'piped the side,' and the officers on the quarter deck removed their hats. There was a moment of awe-inspiring silence while Cochrane strode quickly across the deck to his cabin. He was in the worst of tempers. He had just seen the Port Admiral (Sir Hurricane Humbug, Marryat calls him, but his real name was Sir William Young), who had insisted that the *Impérieuse* should put to sea immediately. Cochrane expostulated. His ship was still fitting out; provisions were not yet stowed and the rigging had not been properly set up. The gun carriages had not been secured and the carronades, which had been run aft to clear the decks, were not shipped on their slides. If the ship encountered bad weather and one of the eighteen pounders broke loose, no one could foretell the consequences of three tons of metal thundering across the deck from side to side as the ship rolled. It was suicide to send a ship to sea in such a state.

The Admiral refused to listen. He may have suggested that this unpreparedness was largely due to Cochrane's frequent absence in London. He did not propose to make an exception to the rule that every ship must put to sea immediately an order to that

effect had been received from the Admiralty. And he was a man, says Marryat, 'who *would* be obeyed, but *would not* listen to reason or common sense.'

As the afternoon wore on and still there was no sign of the Blue Peter on the foremast of the *Impérieuse*, gun after gun sounded preremptorily from the shore. At half-past eight, having stayed in port as long as he dared, Cochrane ordered the signal to be hoisted. There was a thin wail from the bo'sun's pipe. 'All hands make sail ! Away aloft !' Instantly the shrouds swarmed with men. 'Trice up, layout !' And the long naked yards were alive with creeping sailors, swinging on the foot ropes which ran out below them. 'Let fall, sheet home, haul a'board, hoist away !' The bare, towering scaffold of masts and yards is clothed in an instant with a mass of bellying sail. 'Belay !' The blocks and sheaves rattle as the ropes are sheeted home. The capstan crew run round with short heavy tread to weigh anchor, a rattan thwacking across the shoulders of the laggards. 'Man the cat and fish anchor !' And she begins to glide out of the Sound.

Marryat was afterwards told that the Port Admiral 'stood on the platform looking at us and was heard to exclaim—"Damn his eyes ! There he goes at last ! I was afraid that the fellow would have grounded on his beef bones before we should have got him out !"'

As soon as they were out of sight of land the ship was hove to. There was a tender of provisions on one side of her, a lighter carrying ammunition stores on the other, and a third filled with gunpowder towing astern. It was not till the next day that the lighters shoved off to return to port. Meanwhile Cochrane could only

pray for a few hours' fine weather. If a gale was to blow up, or if even the most lightly armed enemy vessel was to catch her thus unprepared, the loss of the ship was a certainty.

At first the weather was cloudy. But on the 18th a heavy sea was running and a strong breeze strengthened to gale force. It was necessary to lower top gallants without delay.

'Mr. Brown! Furl the fore and mizzen topsail and close reef the main. We must shorten sail. Is the main topsail bent?'

'All bent, sir, and the sheet aft.'

'Then beat a retreat and turn the hands up.'

The drums beat to quarters earlier than usual that night. Gun carriages were doubly secured and everything done to avoid undue press of sail. With night-fall the gale increased. The ship was running under bare poles in a lumping sea. But the feverish activity of shortening sail proved useless. The Captain's log for the next forty-eight hours runs thus :

Nov. 19th.—Fresh breezes and cloudy. 5.15 a.m. ship struck and beat over a shoal. Clewed up and came to. Struck top gallant masts.

Nov. 20th.—Weighed and made sail 4.30 p.m. off Ushant. Squalls and fresh gales. Joseph Bennet fell overboard and was drowned [*sic*].

Marryat tells us the reason of this accident, which nearly resulted in disaster. "In the general confusion of leaving port, some iron too near the binnacles had attracted the needle of the compass; the ship was steered out of her course. At midnight, in a heavy gale at the close of the month of November, so dark that you could not distinguish any object, however close, the

Impérieuse dashed upon the rocks between Ushant and the Main. The cry of terror which ran through the lower decks, the grating of the keel as she was forced in ; the violence of the shocks which convulsed the frame of the vessel ; the hurrying up of the ship's company without their clothes ; and then the enormous waves which again bore her up and carried her clean over the reef, will never be effaced from my memory. Our escape was miraculous ; with the exception of her false keel having been torn off, the ship had suffered little injury ; but she had beat over a reef, and was riding by her anchors, surrounded by rocks, some of them as high out of water as her lower yards and close to her. How nearly were the lives of a fine ship's company, and of Lord Cochrane and his officers, sacrificed to the despotism of an admiral who *would* be obeyed ! ”

Cochrane was not the man to let the matter rest there. The Port Admiral should be made to realise the extent to which he jeopardised the safety of his Majesty's ship. He raised the question in the House of Commons next year, illustrating his point about the methods employed in fitting out ships with a description of his experience in the *Impérieuse*. The result was loud cries of ‘Order !’ ‘The Speaker said the noble lord must confine himself to the motion before the House.’

To give a convincing impression of a storm at sea demands exceptional literary gifts in addition to a vivid memory of such an experience. Marryat was to live through storms enough during his twenty-five years at sea, but the memory of the baptism he received off Ushant was never effaced. It was the memory of that gale, and not the bare details of the actual incident on which his story is founded, that inspired his

famous storm scene off this very coast—the club hauling of the *Diomedé* in chapter fifteen of *Peter Simple*.*

The loss of a false keel was not regarded as sufficient justification for the ship to return to port. As they drove south to join the blockading squadron in the Basque Roads, Marryat had time to grow accustomed to the routine of life at sea.

At half-past seven, if he had not been up half the night keeping a watch, he had to turn out to wash in a little tin basin placed on his sea chest. A moment's hesitation to show a leg was the excuse for someone to cut down his hammock or throw a bucket of water over him. At eight o'clock breakfast was served—Scotch coffee (a villainous compound), porridge or biscuit. The forenoon was spent with the other midshipmen learning the elements of navigation, or taking lessons with the schoolmaster in the Captain's cabin. In the afternoon he learnt his duties on deck and all the art of seamanship: how to knot and splice and reef and furl and keep a watch aloft. In the winter evenings there was silence on deck, only broken by the steady tread of the officer of the watch, or the patter of horny feet in response to an order. But a sailing ship is never silent. Her timbers creak and groan as she heels over before a wind; a thunderous flapping of the canvas overhead as a gust catches her, the rushing of the bow wave and the slapping of little seas against her sides orchestrate her progress through the night.

The midshipmen's berth was the scene of uproarious skylarking. Shouts, laughter, all the preparations for a

* This episode is based on the saving of the *Magnificent* (74), which Capt. Hayes actually box-hauled off the Isle de Rhe in 1812. In the old *Britannia* the recitation of this passage was an inevitable question in the navigation examination. As a description of a complicated technical process it deserves to stand beside Cellini's account of how he cast the bronze Perseus.

fight, showed that 'the young gentlemen' were off duty. Innumerable jokes were practised upon the greenhorn—messages to be taken to Lieutenant Cheeks of the Marines, dogfish to be heard barking on deck, the key of the keelson lost and must be found. A lad who was not quick with his fists, who had not earned the respect of his fellows by blacking somebody's eye, was fair sport for jokes of more questionable humour. His hammock was cut down in the middle of the night; his trousers were stolen; he was made sick with ship's tobacco, or drunk with his first taste of rum.

Bullying was the curse of the berth. Marryat's sense of humour was as crude as Smollett's, and he probably suffered less than many another volunteer; but he never spared his readers the truth that a ship might become a hell afloat for a sensitive boy. Gunroom life is not everybody's idea of happiness. Old shellbacks will always be found telling youngsters 'what a dam' good thing it is to rough it at the start.' But Marryat welcomed the improvements he had seen in his own lifetime.

A midshipman did not usually have to suffer the grosser forms of punishment meted out to the common seamen. He was never 'seized up at the gratings' to be flogged. The bo'sun could not 'start' him with his rattan. It is often stated that this unofficial form of punishment, when the bo'sun chased a man along the deck hitting him where and how he liked, became rare after a court martial in 1809. But we shall find that Marryat's career provides ample evidence that starting was common enough until much later; and that, indeed, there were ships in which even the junior officers suffered similar indignities at the hands of their

superiors. For every petty offence in the mess the reefer was unmercifully ‘cobbed’ by his fellows—held down on a table and thrashed with a ‘colt’ of knotted cord. From Captains and Lieutenants his usual punishment was mastheading. The offender was sent up by Jacob’s ladder to the main topmast cross-trees (one hundred and fifty feet above the deck) and told to stay there till further orders. It was not a cruel punishment. A boy could doze or read comfortably up there till he heard the lieutenant shouting up at him through a speaking trumpet to know whether he had sighted anything.

‘When I was a midshipman, it was extremely difficult to avoid the mast-head. Out of six years served in that capacity, I once made a calculation that two of them were passed away perched upon the cross trees, looking down with calm philosophy upon the microcosm below. Yes, though I *never* deserved it, I derived much future advantage from my repeated punishments. The mast-head, for want of something worse to do, became my study; and during the time spent there, I in a manner finished my education. Volumes after volumes were perused to while away the tedious hours; and I believe it is to this mode of punishment adopted by my rigid superiors that the world is indebted for all the pretty books which I am writing.

‘I was generally exalted for thinking or not thinking. . . .

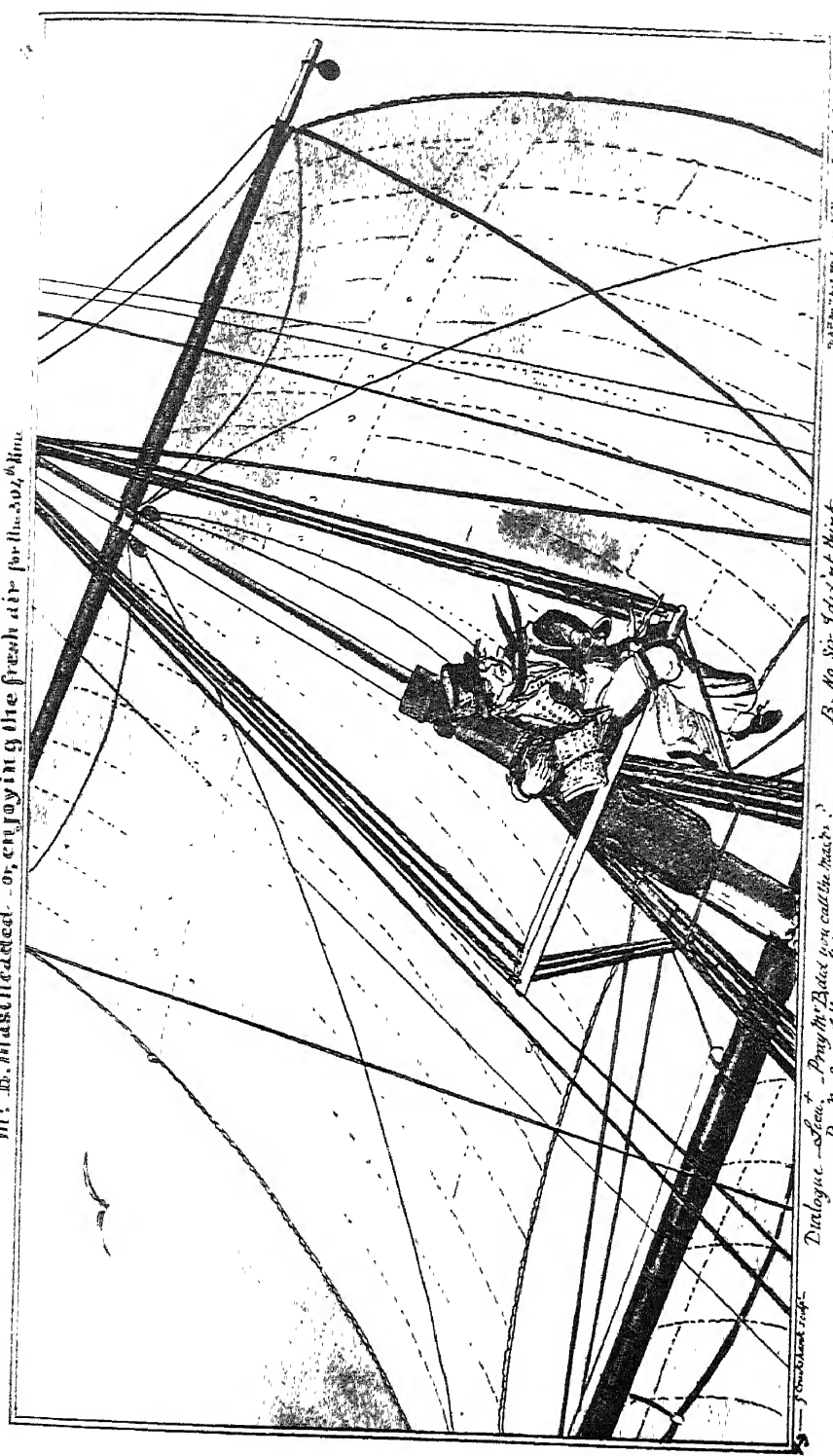
“Mr. M—,” would the first lieutenant cry out, “why did you stay so long on shore with the jolly boat?”

“I went to the post office for the officers’ letters, sir.”

“And pray, sir, who ordered you?”

“No one, sir, but I *thought*——”

Mr. B. mastheaded - or, enjoying the fresh air for the 304th time



— Forward end up —

Dialogue - "Shew!" - "Pray Mr. Bates you call the master?"

B. - No Sir, I thought

Leut. - You thought Sir. How dare you think

B. - No Sir, I did not think

Leut. - Did not think, why

did not you think Sir. III

“ You *thought*, sir ! How dare *you think*?—go up to the mast-head, sir.”

The amount of bullying that went on depended, of course, on the type of character which predominated in the berth. On his first cruise Marryat was extraordinarily fortunate in his shipmates. Of the eight or nine which shared the berth, two at least were outstanding characters. One was the Hon. William Napier, the master's mate, a young man of twenty who had fought at Trafalgar and had just joined from the *Foudroyant*. He was with Marryat in the *Impérieuse* until they were both appointed to other ships in 1809. Though a first rate officer and frequently recommended in despatches, he was not commissioned lieutenant until after he had left Cochrane's ship. After his death in 1834 Marryat proposed to write his biography, but Lady Napier refused the offer. Though never as famous as his cousins, Napier of Sind, Napier the historian, or Admiral Sir Charles Napier who commanded the Baltic Fleet in the Crimean war, he had a distinguished career as ambassador to China. Marryat's attitude to him in 1806 might be compared with that of Peter Simple to O'Brien, the master's mate in the *Diomedé*. Fortunately a fragment of the biography remains in a sketch of his friend's character.

‘ I well remember that I, as well as other youngsters, looked upon him with awe, for he was a giant among us pigmies. But it was without cause, for although it might be excellent to have a giant's strength, he felt that it was tyrannous to use it as a giant. At the period at which I entered the service there was no species of tyranny, injustice and persecution to which we youngsters were not compelled to submit from those who were

our superiors in bodily strength ; but from Napier we received none. He made use of no other than his mental superiority, and, in that, he was so powerful that one word, or a finger raised, was more effectual than all the unlimited blows received from others. Superior to all in physical force, in knowledge, and in station, he never used his superiority but to enforce what was right. One of the best navigators in the Service, he devoted his time and talents to those who wished to learn. At the same time he laughed and played with us as children he insured respect ; and although much feared, he was loved much more. . . . I was for years a messmate of Napier's, and, although not easy to be controlled, and usually returning blow for blow, I can positively assert that I never received a blow from him ; and, at the same time, he was the only one to whom I paid implicit obedience. . . . Well do I recollect the powerful frame of Napier, with his claymore, bounding in advance of his men and cheering them on to victory.'

A closer friend, because only two years older, was Houston Stewart, another aristocratic Highlander. He was to have a long and distinguished career in the Service. Even in 1806 he could lord it over young Frederick because he was already a midshipman and had served on a cruise in the Indian Ocean. The other midshipman in the *Impérieuse*, Stovin by name, is frequently mentioned in despatches for his activity in cutting-out expeditions. Of Marryat's fellow Volunteer, Sam Edwards aged thirteen, we unfortunately know nothing.

The secret of naval success has ever been good gunnery. Under Cochrane the crews were practised at the great

and small guns every day. The *Impérieuse* carried 26 twelve or eighteen pounders on the main deck ; 12 twenty-four pound carronades (a short, wide-bored gun which did terrible execution at close quarters) in the forecastle and poop ; and two long eight-pounders with a range of over a mile for bow and stern chasers. For gun fire to be effective in those days it was necessary to reserve your broadside till the ship was almost alongside the enemy. Under the hail of small shot with which an attack was greeted, in imminent danger of being dismasted by a chain shot, to reserve fire was only possible in a well disciplined ship. Cochrane impressed upon his men the importance of awaiting the signal for a concerted broadside. If a gun was fired prematurely every man in the gun crew was flogged after the action.

When drums beat to quarters to the rhythm of *Hearts of Oak*, Marryat's action station was on the quarter deck. There he stood ready to run messages to every part of the ship : down to the crimson main deck where the crews, stripped to the waist, stood ready to run the guns out through the ports ; along the upper deck to the forecastle through parties of men standing by, cutlass in hand, ready to board or repel boarders ; or painfully assisting a wounded man down to the surgeon's cockpit on the orlop deck. Standing aft he could see the ' noble tier of guns, in a line gently curving out towards the centre ; the tackle laid across the deck ; the shot and wads prepared in ample store (round, grape and canister) ; the powder boys, each with his box full, seated on it, with perfect apparent indifference as to the approaching conflict. The captains of guns, with their priming boxes buckled round their waists ;

the locks fixed upon the guns ; the lanyards laid around them ; the officers with their swords drawn, standing by their respective divisions.

‘ The quarter deck was commanded by the captain in person, assisted by the first lieutenant, the lieutenant of marines, a party of small arm men, with the mate and midshipmen, and a portion of seamen to attend the braces and fight the quarter deck guns. The boatswain was on the forecastle ; the gunner in the magazine, to send up a supply of powder to the guns ; the carpenter watched and reported from time to time the depth of water in the well. He was attended by his mates, who were provided with shot plugs, oakum and tallow, to stop any shot holes which might be made. The surgeon was in the cockpit with his assistants. The knives, saws, tourniquets, sponges, basin, wine and water, were all displayed and ready for the first unlucky patient that might be presented. This was more awful to me than anything I had seen.’ (*Frank Mildmay*).

On November 29th the *Impérieuse* joined the squadron blockading Rochefort. In the absence of Admiral Hood, Commodore Keats of the old *Superbe* commanded the six ships of the line. In those days frigates played the part of light cruisers : they were the eyes of the fleet, often sent to cruise off the coast to prey on merchant shipping. As Allemand’s fleet in the Charente showed no signs of activity, the *Impérieuse* was ordered to cruise south in the direction of Bordeaux.

An extract from Marryat’s private log shows how the days were filled with excitement.

Dec. 16th.—Anchored off Isle Dieu, with a prize.

Dec. 19th.—Engaged a battery, and took two prizes.

Dec. 25th.—Engaged a battery, and received a shot in the counter.

1807

Jan. 2nd.—Stove the cutter, and Henry Christian drowned.

Jan. 4th.—Anchored, and stormed a battery.

Jan. 6th.—Took a galliot ; blew up ditto.

Jan. 8th.—Trying to get a prize off that was ashore, lost five men.

What happened between January 4th and 8th is told in more detail elsewhere. Cochrane's despatch of the 7th gives the official account, but, as always, in bare and business-like language more suitable for a balance sheet than for a struggle of life and death. In his autobiography he tells us more about the incident ; but it remained for Marryat, whose very existence was probably forgotten in the excitement of the moment, to describe scenes such as this twenty years later. Though his accounts in *Frank Mildmay* are usually fairly accurate, in this instance he confuses an incident which occurred at Almeria in 1808 with what happened off the French coast in 1807 ; the log, and a couple of pages devoted to the affair in *Peter Simple*, gives us more of an idea of what actually happened.

On January 3rd they gave chase to several *chasse marées*, or small coasting vessels, off the mouth of the Garonne. The Frenchmen ran south towards the land-locked basin of Arcachon (Cochrane spells it Arcassan, and Marryat, Arcason). The entrance to this harbour forms a nick in the long stretch of dune coast which runs up from the Pyrenees to the mouth of the Garonne. The opening is a narrow channel, guarded on the south by a huge white mountain of sand (the highest dune in Europe), and on the north by the battery of Fort Roquette. To navigate the channel in winter is a dangerous task on account of the shifting bar which lies across it ; and the flat spit of sand on which the fort was built (where there is now a lighthouse) made it

possible for the shore guns to be brought to bear in any direction.

Under press of sail the frigate chased the French vessels until they found shelter under the guns of the fort. Knowing the dangerous nature of this coast on which the Biscay rollers thunder at every season of the year, Cochrane stood out to sea until the next morning. As soon as it was light he sailed the ship close in to the shore. The battery opened fire. 'The first shot which whizzed between the masts had to me a most terrific sound, but the officers and men laughed at it, so of course I pretended to do the same, but in reality I could see nothing to laugh at.' Apparently things were not going too well for the battery. 'Observed ye explosion of a powder magazine at Forte la Teste,' runs the entry in the Master's log, presumably referring to Fort Roquette.

Next day the pinnaces were lowered with the object of cutting out a galliot and another vessel which had been unable to find the entrance to the basin. The galliot was captured and towed back that afternoon. But one of the cutters was caught in the race and swamped in the surf. As soon as the men had been rescued another attempt was made on the remaining vessel. 'Hoisted out the boats and sent them with a Stream Anchor to get off a vessel on shore,' runs the log for January 5th. As the boats approached they were met with a heavy fire. There was nothing for it but to return to the ship again.

That night it was determined to make a surprise landing before dawn. The battery must be silenced before the vessel could be warped off in safety. Napier was given command of one of the boats, Mapleton of

the other. Stewart was permitted to join the party ; but whether Marryat stowed away in the bows and escaped the captain's eye, as Peter Simple did, we cannot say. The despatch adds that ' Mr. Gilbert, the surgeon's first assistant, embraced the opportunity to show his zeal even in this affair foreign to his profession.'

The hazardous enterprise met with complete success. The fort was surprised without loss before daylight. Four 36-pounders, two field pieces, a thirteen inch mortar, military stores and buildings were all destroyed. Warned by the firing on shore, those on board the stranded vessel prepared to defend themselves against a third attack. However, she was successfully boarded, although five of the men from the *Impérieuse* were killed in the struggle on her decks. As it was found impossible to warp her off, she was burned, together with seven other vessels in the basin. That evening, two strange sail having been sighted out to sea, Cochrane decided it was time to leave. Having blown up the galliot and ' fired guns to annoy,' the *Impérieuse* weighed and made sail to northward.

Concluding his despatch about this affair Cochrane adds, with his usual nonchalance, a list of captures since December 15th ; eight small prizes, mostly wine vessels ; two transports wrecked ; three *chasse marées* and two sloops burned or turned adrift.

As soon as he had reported himself on board the flagship off the Sable d'Olonne on January 29th, he was ordered to provision the brig *Atalante*. Keats knew that the hold of the *Impérieuse* must be bursting with captured provisions and he had orders to send her back to England as soon as possible. The *Atalante*, on the other hand, had already spent four months watching Rochefort

and was to remain at sea. Cochrane agreed. But when he had been on board the ship and had talked with her officers he remonstrated with Keats. The ship was totally unfit for further service. Her foremast was sprung. She made twenty inches of water an hour, and she would inevitably founder in the first gale that struck her. Keats replied that there was nothing he could do about that. His orders were that she should remain with the squadron. Cochrane had no alternative but to do as he was told. As soon as the *Impérieuse* had provisioned and watered the ship she sailed for Plymouth.

The fate of the *Atalante* a few months later was exactly as Cochrane had foretold. Speaking in the House of Commons he said : " In spite of remonstrance she was sent to sea, and ship, crew and all went to the bottom. (Loud laughter.) It is no laughing matter. Like the fable of the frogs, it may be fun for some, though anything but fun for brave men, whose lives are so valuable to their families and their country."

The contrast between the *Impérieuse* and the *Atalante* is typical. The crew of the one, under the command of a brave and efficient captain, performed prodigies of valour on every cruise. That of the other was condemned to death in a ship which should never have put to sea. As a matter of fact some of them did escape the wreck, but only to become prisoners of war. And all that an unreformed House of Commons was capable of was—loud laughter.

CHAPTER IV

THE MEDITERRANEAN

I'm here or there a jolly dog,
At land or sea I'm all agog,
To fight, or kiss, or touch the grog,
For I'm a jovial midshipman,
A smart young midshipman,
A little midshipman !

Sea Song.

IN the summer of 1807 there was a General Election. Lord Cochrane and Sir Francis Burdett stood for the only genuine democratic constituency in the country, the borough of Westminster. The two Radicals had the satisfaction of beating Sheridan and other government candidates. As soon as Parliament met, Cochrane launched another attack on the naval administration, moving for the papers of the Rochefort squadron to prove his allegations. The motion was negatived without a division and Cochrane found himself ordered to sea once more. This time the Admiralty took care to send him farther away.

Meanwhile Marryat had been able to visit his younger brothers at school at Sydenham. The war-scarred veteran recounted his adventures in an aura of glory. One of the boys who listened to his stories was Edward Howard. He had long been a particular friend of Marryat; now he was inspired by his

example to go to sea himself and to write novels so similar that one at least—*Rattlin the Reefer*—was until recently regarded as Marryat's own work. Later, when both of them had retired from the sea, Howard helped Marryat to edit the *Metropolitan Magazine*. It was then that Marryat helped his friend to transform his first book from an autobiography into something like a novel. However, there remains in that book a valuable picture of Marryat's family and of his school days.

Speaking of Frederick's visit to the school on his first leave, when he 'already begun his harvest of laurels in the navy under a distinguished officer,' Howard says : ' Master Frank was two or three years my senior, and before he went to sea, not going to the same school as myself, we got together only during the vacations ; when notwithstanding my prowess, he would fag me desperately at cricket, outswim me on the lake, and outcap me at making Latin verses. However, I consoled myself by saying : " As I grow older all this superiority will cease." But when he returned after his first cruise, glittering in his graceful uniform, my hopes and my ambition sank below zero. He was already a man and an officer—I a schoolboy and nothing else.'

Before Marryat returned to Plymouth the two had a grand day's fishing. But his leave only lasted a few weeks. That April he was again on board the *Impérieuse*, cruising off Ushant. During the summer, while Cochrane was raising a hornet's nest at Westminster, an acting captain, Alexander Skene, was in command. After Cochrane he was a failure. He was the sort of captain who put to sea as seldom as he could. The consequence,

writes Marryat, was 'that our guns were never cast loose, or our boats disturbed from their booms. This was a repose which was, however, rather trying to the officers and ship's company, who had been accustomed to such an active life.'

It was with immense satisfaction that the crew welcomed Cochrane back to the ship on September 12th. There were few changes because, says Cochrane, 'I was so annoyed by the description of persons attempted to be palmed off upon me that I preferred going to sea with midshipmen of my own training, making them perform the duties of lieutenants, rather than run the risk of receiving such lieutenants as were frequently appointed through aristocratic or political influence.' Sam Brown was no longer with them, the new first lieutenant being Edward Caulfield, who soon showed himself an intrepid and zealous leader. In the midshipmen's berth there was a new-comer called Henry Cobbett, aged thirteen. To oblige his friend old Cobbett the Radical, who was now farming in Hampshire, Cochrane had agreed to take his son into his ship. Unfortunately, young Cobbett turned out to be a bully of the worst sort. Had Napier given him the opportunity he might have earned an even worse place in literature than he has as Murphy in *Frank Mildmay* and as Vigors in *Midshipman Easy*. Curiously enough, though Marryat was a year his senior and had already earned a reputation for a quick temper and a good fighter, Cobbett seems to have bullied him as much as he did any of the others. For two years they hated each other as bitterly as only small boys can. Then, one day in 1809, when the ship was in harbour at Malta, Cobbett fell overboard. He could not swim.

Marryat jumped over the side to hold him up until a boat could be lowered. 'The officers and ship's company gave me more credit for this action than I really deserved.' Cochrane, we know, gave him a certificate of gallantry. The incident is described in Marryat's first novel; but in that book the hero, a proud, revengeful fellow, only saves his enemy's life to torment him thereafter, indeed to come near murdering him. Marryat's real reaction is shown in a letter to his mother: 'from that moment I have loved the fellow as I never loved friend before. All my hate is forgotten. I have saved his life.'

The Mediterranean was the destination of the *Impérieuse*—the very focus of the war, and sanguine were the anticipations of the officers and men of what they would be able to accomplish in fine weather and smooth water, after having done so much on a stormy coast and during a winter's cruise.'

Marryat was right to call it the focus of the war. Napoleon told his brother that Sicily was the most important spot in the world that year. The twenty years' war with France had entered upon its final phase. One by one Britain's allies had been knocked out of the ring at Austerlitz, at Jena, at Friedland. With the conclusion of the Treaty of Tilsit in 1807 Napoleon controlled the entire continent. Naples had been conquered in 1806; Spain was still his ally. Only Britain remained free to attack him. Since he could not beat the British on land, he determined to strangle them on sea. The size of his building programme shows that he was still far from giving up hope of supremacy at sea. On paper he had 130 of the line in 1809. To meet this threat Britain built 36 new ships

of the line in 1807, 48 in 1808 and 47 in 1809. In the year of Trafalgar the total number of British ships commissioned for service at sea was 461 : in 1809 it was 563. But paper threats did not satisfy Napoleon. He would break the blockade which imprisoned his fleets, not by battle, but by strangling Britain's trade. Without the sinews of war she would never be able to maintain that vast naval armament which intimidated his admirals. With this aim he issued the Berlin Decrees. Britain replied a few months later with the Orders in Council, and the war became a war of exhaustion. 'No trade except through Great Britain,' proclaimed the Prime Minister. 'No trade with any ship from a British port,' ordered the Emperor. In theory all coast-wise trade was thus abolished. The point, however, was to see which side could enforce its will. Napoleon failed because he underestimated the effects of British supremacy at sea. Trafalgar assured Britain the victory in the end, but the effort strained the naval and financial resources of the country as never before.

To enforce his policy Napoleon had to bring the whole coast line of Europe under his control. Naples was overrun, Denmark and Danzig brought to heel. Britain's reply was to send Gambier to 'Copenhagen' the Danish fleet without formal declaration of war. Napoleon pretended to be very shocked. Then a British expeditionary force, just large enough to keep Murat and Joseph Bonaparte busy, was sent to Sicily. While Saumarez held the Baltic, Collingwood held the Mediterranean. England had won the first round. Next Napoleon tried to force Portugal to join his system. An army of occupation was sent through Spain and the

result was the Spanish revolt of 1808. End of round two.

But we are looking at history through the wrong end of the telescope. In 1807 Napoleon's position appeared to be almost impregnable. Almost the entire coast line from the Baltic to the Adriatic was in his hands. At every port blockading squadrons had to be posted—off Danzig, and Antwerp, Brest, Rochefort, Cadiz, Toulon, Naples, Corfu, even in the Dardanelles. "The world has never seen so impressive a demonstration of the influence of sea power upon its history. Those far distant, storm-beaten ships, upon which the Grand Army never looked, stood between it and the dominion of the world."

Of course it was quite impossible even for 500 ships to strangle the whole maritime traffic of Europe. Coast-wise trade still continued. Both sides employed smugglers. The Grand Army was largely shod with British boots smuggled via Heligoland, and most of the vast amount of spirits drunk by the Peninsular Army was shipped from Bordeaux. What Napoleon did not foresee was that as a result of smuggling on a colossal scale, and of the profits accruing from the licences and port dues enforced on neutrals, British trade revenue actually increased as the result of the famous Decrees.*

As far as a cruising captain like Cochrane was concerned, the Continental Blockade made life much easier. No matter where he sailed, every trading vessel sighted was fair prey. A warning gun forced the trader to heave to and have her papers examined. If her licence was in order (forged licences were common)

* Total British exports to the Continent, omitting £ ,000 : 1806—£27,245 ; 1809—£18,950 ; 1810—£38,530 ; 1812—£24,239.

she was allowed to proceed, having paid toll to the British supremacy at sea at the last port at which she had touched. If she resisted, be she French, Genoese, Turk or Russian, she was captured as a prize. With the French fleet bottled up in port there was none to protect or to avenge her. The Americans suffered most because, as neutrals, they did most of the port-to-port carrying trade. No matter. They were forced to admit British officers on board. Frequently the cargo was condemned as contraband ; sometimes, when seamen had been deserting by hundreds from the Navy, their best men were impressed. Analysing the ship's company of a particular line of battle ship in 1805 Marryat states that fifteen nationalities were represented : 15 Americans, 4 French, 2 Russians, 2 Dutch, 10 Negroes, etc. English seamen were not the only ones to rule the waves.

The acquisition of naval bases of first class strategic importance gave Britain a strong position in the Mediterranean, even in the grim year of 1807. Besides Gibraltar, there was Malta, occupied for the last ten years without a shred of legal claim ; the Balearics, with the useful harbour of Port Mahon ; and eight thousand British troops were in Sicily. From his flagship, the *Ocean*, Collingwood controlled the situation. Poor man, circumstances had compelled him to exchange the profession of seaman for that of diplomatist. Never again was he to lead his line into battle as he had done so nobly at Trafalgar. The French would no longer fight at sea. So Collingwood was chained to his desk, writing despatches, fleet orders, letters, memoranda. For three years he never put foot on shore. For five years he never saw an enemy line of battle ship at sea. Whenever he could free himself of the web of Mediter-

anean intrigue during his long watch outside Toulon he wrote those letters to his wife which have placed him in the first rank of English letter writers. At one time Marryat proposed to write his life, at another to write of his times under the title of 'The Era of Nelson'; but neither project was ever carried out.

Collingwood was faced with a dangerous and intricate situation. Ferdinand and Caroline, the most despicable of a despicable family, had been hustled out of Naples by a French army the previous year. They took refuge behind a sturdy line of English battle ships in Palermo harbour. They were the guests and, nominally, the allies of Admiral Collingwood. "I hope," wrote the Queen, "you will be to us what Lord Nelson was, our friend, protector and defender." Collingwood distrusted the woman. He knew that she was a shrill, hysterical, scheming female who really detested the English. For the last eighteen months she had been bombarding Napoleon with requests to be allowed to return to Naples and declare war on the British. The Emperor did not even trouble to answer her letters. Ferdinand, though an ill-mannered boor, was easier to cope with. He infinitely preferred hunting and shooting in Sicily to worrying about the welfare of those subjects who had shown so little regret at his departure. Thus the unfortunate Admiral had, at one and the same time, to watch Caroline's intrigues, prevent Murat from crossing the straits, make the English rule in Sicily popular and see that the Toulon fleet did not put to sea. Quite apart from diplomacy, he had to maintain communication with five blockading squadrons, attend to all the minutiae of fleet discipline, the movements of a hundred ships, and the organisation of expeditions to the

Dardanelles and Alexandria. All this was to be done by a sick man who already had the longest active service record of any British admiral.

The *Impérieuse* was a tiny pawn in this vast game of European politics. She sailed from England on September 12th in a convoy of 38 sail of merchant vessels and troopships (called 'lobster smacks' from the redcoats on board) to reinforce the garrisons at Malta and Palermo. As usual the convoy managed to get dispersed. Again and again the *Impérieuse* had to fire a signal gun to gather her flock together. On October 31st she brought the vessels safely into Valetta harbour. After waiting there a week Cochrane sailed for Sicily to find his admiral.

Probably he hoped to be given some roving commission. But Collingwood, a singularly humane man, disliked the methods adopted by frigate captains on such cruises. He was opposed to cutting-out expeditions : 'the practice of detaching boats on a distant service out of the protection of the ship is a cruel thing to gallant young officers, who do not like to return even when their judgment dictates to them that they ought. They are enterprises highly injurious to the public service, because they disable the ship from performing her real duty ; and they are discouraging to the men because they show, even to those of the least observation, that they are schemes not directed by judgment.' Many captains employed such methods in their haste to make a fortune and a name in the space of a few weeks. When they returned, their reception was cool. Captain Brenton, who, in the *Spartan*, rivalled the fame of Cochrane, suffered in this way. The admiral's professional life, he complains, 'had been chiefly passed in ships of the line, as forming parts of great fleets and

engaged in great movements ; and he had therefore less sympathy with that spirit of adventurous daring, which suited the commander of a cruising frigate ; he was disposed to look with jealousy, if not disapprobation, at the risks which were continually run for the sake of very little intrinsic value. At this period also, age had added something of severity to his judgment, and he was not likely to admit any extenuation of an error which had cost the lives of so many valuable men.' But Collingwood was also an open minded man. After a year or two the exploits of the frigates under his control compelled him to change his mind. Writing in 1809 of men like Cochrane, Brenton, Maxwell and Hoste he says, ' the activity and zeal in those gallant young men keep up my spirits, and make me equal to bear the disagreeables that happen from the contentions of some other ships. Those who do all the service give no trouble ; those who give the trouble are good for nothing.' Of all the admirals Cochrane served under, Collingwood is the only one for whom that tempestuous nobleman has nothing but praise.

If he had hoped to be given the sort of commission he liked, he was soon disappointed. At Palermo he was ordered to join the blockading squadron off Toulon. On November 14th, when they were sailing north under the eastern coast of Corsica, a large vessel of the rig called ' poleacre ' was sighted. She looked like a fast-sailing merchant vessel, but on a nearer view she had a suspiciously warlike air. She showed her teeth with guns glinting cruelly from her ports. The general opinion was that she was a Genoese privateer. The wind was too light for the frigate to approach closer, so three boats were lowered under the command of

Napier and Fayrer. In one of them Marryat found a place. He gives a much more detailed account of the encounter than does Cochrane's despatch; but by an odd slip he says that it took place 'coasting down the shores of Sicily on Sunday the 15th.' Many features of the action are also incorporated in one of the most spirited episodes in *Midshipman Easy*, the engagement with the frigate in chapter twenty-nine. In that account the scene is laid correctly off the coast of Corsica.

When the boats were two cables' length from the stranger she hoisted British colours. That was disappointing. However they continued to row towards her. As soon as they were within hail Napier enquired who she was, adding that if she was a British vessel she could have no objections to being boarded. The reply was that the ship was a Maltese privateer, but since her captain distrusted the nationality of the boats, he refused to allow anyone to come on board. For proof, Napier pointed to the red-coated marines who sat beside him. In answer the Maltese captain pointed to his guns and his boarding netting. He told Napier he would fire if they approached closer. Napier refused to turn back now that his suspicions were aroused. He ordered his men to give way. As he did so, the captain leaped down from the poop, telling him to take the consequences. 'The answer was a cheer and a simultaneous dash of the boats to the vessel's sides. A most desperate conflict ensued, perhaps the best contested and the most equally matched on record. In about ten minutes, the captain having fallen, a portion of the crew of the privateer gave way, the remainder fought until they were cut to pieces, and the vessel remained in our possession. And then, when the decks

were strewed with the dying and the dead, was discovered the unfortunate mistake which had been committed.'

The ship was indeed a Maltese privateer. Her crew consisted of a heterogeneous collection of villainous looking scoundrels; but among the half-dozen nationalities represented were four British subjects—three Maltese boys and the captain, named Pasquil Giliano. Of the English, two seamen had been killed and several wounded, Fayrer with a bullet through his arm and Napier with the bone behind his ear splintered by a shot.

The boats rowed sadly back to the frigate. They had suffered a loss they could ill afford and captured a vessel of their own nationality. Cochrane was more sorry than angry. 'I never at any time,' writes Marryat, 'saw Lord Cochrane so much dejected as he was for many days after this affair.'

On their return to Malta they learned that £500 had been offered for the capture of the *King George*, as Giliano had the effrontery to call his vessel. But it was common knowledge that, though she was a notorious pirate, members of the Court of Admiralty had shares in her. The result was that they 'never obtained the premium for her capture, but in place thereof were condemned by the Court to pay 500 double sequins. After this the Maltese Court always threw every obstacle in the way of condemning our prizes.' To be fined for capturing a pirate was hard enough, but anything was possible in that Court. Three years later Cochrane had his revenge by unmasking its extraordinary peculations in Parliament. The farcical story of how he did so must be read in his autobiography. Mean-

while he sent his prizes, whenever possible, to the Prize Court at Gibraltar.

As soon as the business of the *King George* had been settled the *Impérieuse* was off again for the Adriatic. At Corfu four British ships had imprisoned some enemy frigates. To this squadron the *Impérieuse* was now attached, and Collingwood had even promised the command of it to her captain. A quarrel with another captain about the issue of free passes to enemy merchantmen made this impossible. Cochrane's rival told the admiral that from his lordship's 'want of discretion he was unfit to be entrusted with a single ship, much less the command of a squadron.' Cochrane was superseded. Never again was he to have the chance of such a command, until the day when he became Lord High Admiral of the Peruvian Navy (four ships), in which capacity he destroyed the entire Spanish South American fleet.

While they were in the Adriatic they heard that Russia had declared war on Britain. It is difficult in these days to appreciate the old haphazard character of communications with a cruiser like the *Impérieuse*. Except for a chance meeting with another ship carrying despatches, a captain could never know for certain which countries were allies and which were hostile. Such matters did not affect the zeal of Midshipman Marryat—for he was now rated as such. With equal zest, with or without his captain's orders, he found a place in the boats which rowed out to capture a Turkish vessel one week, a Russian the next ; Italian, Spanish, French, it made no difference to him. War was a game to be played with courage and skill, but with little hatred except in the crisis of a hand to hand struggle. Behind all this

meaningless activity loomed the terrifying, yet slightly comic, spectre of the Corsican Ogre. Marryat taught himself to draw by copying caricatures of that rotund figure. In 1807 neither he nor the Emperor had probably ever heard of St. Helena. Yet a day was to come when, because there was no one else on that desolate rock to perform the task, the services of an obscure naval officer were required to draw the official portrait of the dead Emperor before the coffin was nailed down.

On her return from the Adriatic the *Impérieuse* was only in Valetta harbour three days. Her captain then received orders 'to harass the Spanish and French coast as opportunity serves.' A poor substitute for the command of a squadron, but the sort of commission Cochrane loved. 'I determined to make every exertion to merit his lordship's approbation.'

On January 31st, 1808, they sailed for Barcelona. On February 11th they 'looked into' that harbour, but finding it too heavily fortified, sailed south to Cartagena. 'Feb. 17th,' runs Marryat's log, 'Boats engaged and took 2 vessels laden with copper and hides. Feb. 19th. At night fell in with a brig and 4 gun boats. Engaged and took brig and 1 gun boat. Sunk 2 others.'

They had arrived off Cape Palos at sunset. At nine o'clock in the evening some enemy gun boats left their anchorage in an attempt to slip past the *Impérieuse* in the dark. Cochrane saw them and ordered all lights to be dowsed. Unseen by her quarry, the ship closed for action. As she crept close, one of the gunboats sighted her and tried to struggle back to safety. She was intercepted, and the *Impérieuse* ran in among her

consorts like a fox in a hen coop. She opened up with both broadsides, with the enemy all about her.

From a prisoner Cochrane learnt something of more importance than a cargo of copper and hides. In the bay of Almeria lay a big French privateer laden with munitions of war. She was the same 16-gun vessel which had recently beaten off the boats of the *Spartan* with the loss of sixty men. The *Impérieuse* should succeed where the *Spartan* had failed.

Creeping round Cape Gata, the frigate hove to outside the bay on February 21st. Then, just before dawn, she hoisted American colours (a customary *ruse de guerre*) and stood in boldly towards the town. She anchored so confidently in the midst of the vessels in the bay that no one suspected her identity. A privateer lay on one side of her, two brigs and a xebecque on the other. The batteries on the cliffs surrounding the bay made it one of the safest anchorages in Spain.

In the first light of dawn there was intense activity on board the frigate. Boats were fitted out and lowered, cutlasses sharpened, muskets primed, four-pounders lowered into the bows of the cutters. Sailors, with cutlasses buckled round their waists and pistols stuck into their belts, were at the oars ; marines, their muskets lying across their knees, were seated in the stern sheets ; Caulfield, Stewart and the other officers were in the captain's cabin receiving their final instructions. 'The officers returned on deck and descended into their respective boats, where they found many of the younger midshipmen, who, although not selected for the service, had smuggled themselves into the boats that they might be participators in the conflict. The Captain, although he did not send them on the service,

had no objection to their going, and therefore pretended not to see them when he looked over the side, and desired the boats to shove off.'

But the suspicions of neighbouring vessels had at last been aroused. Their decks were soon alive with men running up from below, musket in hand. As the first pinnace approached the privateer, she was greeted with a murderous fire. 'Half our boat's crew were laid beneath the thwarts; the remainder boarded. Caulfield was the first on the vessel's decks—a volley of musketballs received him, and he fell dead with thirteen bullets in his body. But he was amply avenged; out of the whole crew of the privateer, but fifteen, who escaped below and hid themselves, remained alive; no quarter was shown, they were cut to atoms on the deck, and those who threw themselves into the sea to save their lives were shot as they struggled in the water. The fire of the privateer had been the signal for the batteries to open, and now was presented an animated scene of the boats boarding in every direction, with more or less resistance; the whole bay reverberating with the roar of cannon, the smooth water ploughed up in every quarter by the shot directed against the frigate and the boats, while the *Impérieuse* returned the fire, warping round and round with her springs, to silence the most galling. This continued for nearly an hour, by which time the captured vessels were under all sail, and then the *Impérieuse* hove up her anchor, and, with the English colours waving at her gaff, and still keeping up an undiminished fire, sailed slowly out, the victor.'

According to Cochrane, her exit was not quite so composed as Marryat's account would imply. The

wind suddenly dropped. The inhabitants lining the shore saw to their delight that the invader lay becalmed. All the batteries within range blazed at her in turn. One, on a cliff close by, proved particularly annoying. However, 'by exercising great care in laying our guns, we contrived to keep this battery from doing mischief, except that now and then they managed to hull the prizes which had been placed between the battery and the frigate.' At last, just before noon, a light breeze sprang up to carry the *Impérieuse* and her three prizes out of range. Even then they were not out of danger. At four o'clock a Spanish ship of the line loomed up on the horizon. But by keeping close to the wind the frigate managed to escape her attentions and sailed off with her convoy in the direction of Gibraltar. On their arrival the whole ship's company attended the funeral of the gallant Caulfield.

Marryat gives three versions of this brilliant affair. The most accurate is the one quoted, written up at a later date from his log. In *The King's Own* there is a vivid description of boarding just such a privateer, but the leader of that exploit is not killed. In *Frank Mildmay* Caulfield's death is described, and a very curious story added, which illustrates the enmity that existed between Marryat and Cobbett. Marryat describes himself as following Caulfield up the side so closely that, when the latter fell back dead, he was knocked down by his fall. Surging over him, the boarders trampled his body to gain the deck. When all was over the bodies of the killed and wounded were laid out. "I was numbered among the former, and stretched out between the guns by the side of the first

lieutenant and the other dead bodies." The surgeon and Gilbert, his assistant, came on board from the frigate. "Murphy (i.e., Cobbett) came along with them. He had not been of the boarding party ; and seeing my supposed lifeless corpse, he gave it a slight kick, saying at the same time ' Here is a young cock that has done crowing ! Well, for a wonder, this chap has cheated the gallows.'

" The sound of the fellow's detested voice was enough to recall me from the grave : I faintly exclaimed ' You're a liar ! ' "

" The cruises of the *Impérieuse*," wrote Marryat, looking back on that memorable time, " were periods of continual excitement, from the hour in which she hove up her anchor till she dropped it again in port ; the day that passed without a shot being fired in anger was with us a blank day ; the boats were hardly secured on the booms than they were cast loose and out again ; the yard and stay tackles were for ever hoisting up and lowering down. The expedition with which parties were formed for service ; the rapidity of the frigate's movements night and day ; the hasty sleep, snatched at all hours ; the waking up at the report of the guns, which seemed the only key note to the hearts of those on board ; the beautiful precision of our fire, obtained by constant practice ; the coolness and courage of our captain, inoculating the whole of the ship's company ; . . . when memory sweeps along those years of excitement even now my pulse beats more quickly with the reminiscence."

Here is a sample from his log :

1808

April 1st.—Detained an American brig.

April 2nd.—Took a Spanish tower and blew it up.

April 5th.—Cut a brig out from under a battery.

April 8th.—Took a brig laden with wine—went in her to Gibraltar.

In four months they captured 1 brig, 6 gunboats, 1 privateer and 50 sail of merchantmen. Every type of craft fell into their hands—Moorish xebecques, Spanish tartans and settees, fast sailing *chasse marées*, lateen rigged feluccas which haunt those seas. Some would be sent back to be condemned as prizes ; others were converted into vessels of war ; others were rifled and sunk on the spot.

Whenever a vessel was sent to the Prize Courts, a prize crew was put on board under the command of a midshipman or some junior officer. ‘Went in her to Gibraltar.’ It was Marryat’s first command ; but no hint of the emotion with which he accepted it could appear in a log inspected by the captain. For what it really meant to him we must turn to the pages of his first book. Perhaps Mildmay’s adventure is embellished, but it is founded on fact. Time, place and vessel agree with the log.

He was honoured with the charge of the brig laden with tobacco and wine. ‘So much was the crew of the frigate reduced by former captures that I was only allowed three men. I was, however, so delighted with my first command that I verily believe if they had only given me a dog and a pig I should have been satisfied.’ The wine was their undoing : 193 pipes of it, intended for the Spanish fleet. ‘My men very soon helped themselves to as much as rendered them nearly useless to me, being more than half-seas over.’

After a terrible moment when the brig broached to and the mainmast went by the board, the crew began to sober up. Somehow Marryat managed to take the vessel round Europa Point, half dead with fatigue from standing at the helm. As usual, the bay was full of shipping. How was he to shorten sail, and bring his vessel to anchor without a collision? Only by skilfully putting down his helm did he manage to avoid a gunboat. "Shorten sail!" bawled the officer of the watch at the slight figure at the helm, as the brig shot past his stern. Marryat had no leisure to reply. How in heaven's name was he to come to safely in that crowded bay? A brilliant thought struck him. Just ahead loomed the huge bulk of a troopship. "I steered for the 'lobster smack' and ran smack on board of her. . . .

"My frigate arrived the next morning. The captain sent for me, and I gave him an account of my voyage and my disasters; he very kindly consoled me for my misfortune; and so far from being angry with me for losing my masts, said it was wonderful, under the circumstances, how I had succeeded in saving the vessel."

CHAPTER V

OFF THE COAST OF SPAIN

Who seeks the way to win renown
Or flies with wings to high desire,
Who seeks to wear the laurel crown,
Or hath the mind that would aspire—
Tell him his native soil eschew,
Tell him go range and seek a new.

SIR RICHARD GRENVILLE.

A Song in Praise of Seafaring Men.

AFTER refitting at Gibraltar the *Impérieuse* was cruising leisurely along the southern coast of Spain when, on June 1st, 1808, she fell in with the *Trident*. The latter carried momentous news. The people of Spain had risen in revolt against Joseph Bonaparte, the puppet king. Spain had declared herself the ally of Great Britain and her inhabitants were busy massacring all the Frenchmen they could lay their hands upon.

Cochrane immediately turned west for fresh instructions. On June 18th he found the fleet at Cadiz. Admiral Rosily, who had been blockaded there with eight ships, had just surrendered. Extraordinary scenes met the eyes of those who went ashore. ‘When our officers land at Cadiz, which they do every day, they are surrounded by multitudes crying *Vivan los Ingleses ! Viva King George ! Viva Collingwood !*’ An able seaman called Pemberton gives a brilliant impression of this enthusiasm in his memoirs, published under the curious

title of *Pel. Verjuice*. It is a forgotten book, though of rare value, not merely because it is almost the only expression of the point of view of the lower deck, but for the flashing colour of its style. How heartening it was, he says, 'to be there, under the glad heart-flashed gaze of that white city's tens of thousands of admiring eyes—to be there listening to the shouts of joy; to see the waving and shimmering of forests of caps, handkerchiefs, scarfs, shawls, and streamers from quays, walls, doors, windows, and roofs.'

The duties of cruising frigates were now the reverse of those upon which they had been recently employed. Instead of operating on a hostile coast, depending on prizes for provisions, it was now possible to enter almost any port south of Barcelona to water and refit. The orders Cochrane received were beautifully vague: 'to assist the Spaniards by every means in his power.' With his quick grasp of strategy he seized upon the key to the prosecution of this new war. Would that the Admiralty had done the same! Cochrane may have exaggerated his point when he said that a squadron operating at the right place would have prevented the Peninsular War, but it is undeniable that had a well-organised fleet done what a few adventurous frigates did on their own account, that war might have been over in a few months. As Cochrane saw it, the coast north of Barcelona was the place of critical importance. A concentration there would threaten the main link between France and Spain. The eastern ridges of the Pyrenees and the highlands of Gerona force the main road from France to cling to the coast all the way from Perpignan to Barcelona. With guerilla bands operating in the mountains and hostile ships cruising along the

Catalan seaboard, the route lay at the mercy of the British and their new allies. Using Minorca as a base, Cochrane determined to operate along this coast. By interrupting supplies, blowing up bridges, blocking roads, surprising the fortifications along the route, they could, with the support of the inhabitants, cut off the retreat of the French army of occupation.

On their way north they called in at Almeria to see their friends of a few months back. When they landed the English milord and his gallant officers 'were received with every mark of friendship, notwithstanding our recent hostile visits.' Arrived at Port Mahon, Marryat had the satisfaction of seeing again his friends Harrison and Napier, who had got lost while in charge of prizes. Lieutenant Harrison seems, indeed, to have been a feckless person. He got himself captured by the French a few weeks later as the result of landing with only two seamen. As with all the incidents of that year, his adventures were stored up in Marryat's brain. The story of one such capture occurs in *Peter Simple*. and the opportunities of adventure for a midshipman lost while in command of a prize are brilliantly exploited in *Midshipman Easy*.

At the beginning of July Cochrane decided to let the Spaniards know that he was there to help them. Barcelona had been occupied by General Duhesme. The inhabitants should be encouraged to resist foreign rule in their city. So, with his usual bravado, he sailed the *Impérieuse* right into the mouth of the harbour, hoisted British and Spanish colours, and gave the garrison an ironic salute of twenty-one guns. The town batteries thundered in reply, but their shot fell short. Thousands of Spaniards could be seen on the housetops and along

the waterfront, cheering and waving to the ship. When cavalry dashed up to suppress the insurrection, the *Impérieuse* put before the wind and sailed out to sea.

As a result of putting in to various places along the coast the British officers began to see war in another aspect. Every time they landed they were met by a pathetic deputation headed by the village priest, with stories of horrors past telling and impositions past bearing. Up to now Marryat and the others had known war only as a thrilling game of tip and run ; now they saw it as Goya saw it in *Los Desastres de la Guerra*. The horrible truth about war, a truth long hidden by the gay methods they employed, began to dawn on them. "I was indignant," writes Cochrane in strangely modern tones, "at seeing the wanton devastation committed by a military power pretending to high notions of civilisation, and on that account spared no pains to instruct the persecuted inhabitants how to turn the tables on their spoilers."

He soon learned to appreciate the virtues of the Catalan as a fighter. The *guerrilleros*, here called *somatenes* from an ancient law which called upon all male inhabitants to defend the parish when the alarum bell was rung from the church, might not be amenable to discipline ; as Wellington discovered, they were useless in any extensive scheme of operations ; but the energy of their hate made them ideal collaborators in enterprises of the Cochrane type.

The best way to help them was to turn engineer, a profession entirely in accordance with his genius, as his experiments with high explosives and steam engines were to prove later. Operations began at Cape Mataro. Parties were sent ashore with sticks of dynamite and fuses

to instruct enthusiastic Spaniards in the art of annoying the French. The main road was cut at one point; overhanging rocks blown down at another; bridges were destroyed and the course of a river diverted to flood a low-lying area. For a few days the road was impassable. French engineers soon cleared away the debris to reconstruct this vital line of communication. But a week later the *Impérieuse* returned to wreck their efforts once more.

Ten miles north of Barcelona stood the Castle of Mongat, guarding the last stage of the road from France.* In the last week of July Cochrane learned that Duhesme had taken a large force of infantry inland. Their return to Barcelona could be obstructed by the capture of this castle. Parties were landed to blow up the road to the south to render assistance impossible. Eight hundred Spaniards volunteered to attack the fort itself. These, with a party of marines under Lieutenant Hoare and seamen under Midshipman Marryat, prepared to dislodge the French garrison.

Early on the morning of July 31st, Cochrane rowed ashore to reconnoitre the position. The castle was built on a cliff inaccessible from the sea, and it was protected by outposts on the landward side. The shore party was ordered to rush these outlying forts while the ship, standing close in under the cliff, engaged the castle itself.

The outposts were easily carried at the point of the bayonet. As the position was now desperate, the defenders hung out a flag of truce. But the exasperated Spaniards, flushed with victory, continued to try to batter

* Or Mongal. There is a variety of spelling of these places along the Catalan coast. e.g., Cadaques or Caldaques; Silva or Selva; Krous or Creus.

down the gate. Cochrane made his way to the entrance of the castle. The garrison, he was informed, was willing to surrender, but not to the Spaniards. This was agreed to. The gate was opened and the French officers gave up their swords, Cochrane taking advantage of the occasion to lecture the commanding officer on the barbarities perpetrated by his troops in the country districts. Then the prisoners were marched down the hill to the boats. At first the Spaniards would not let them pass. The guard of marines had to force a way through the crowd with the butts of their muskets. As the procession made its way down the hill a wild mob ran beside it, cursing, throwing stones, making rushes to lynch the prisoners. At last the boats were reached and the crowd was left howling on the beach. "What became of the men forming the captured outposts," says Cochrane, "I never knew, and was not anxious to enquire." As he sat in the stern of one of the gigs, looking at the drawn faces of the prisoners with the yells of the mob ringing in their ears, Marryat might well have reflected that this was something new in his experience of warfare.

As soon as he had transferred his prisoners to a British ship encountered off the coast, Cochrane determined to give the French a taste of what their armies were doing in Spain. Throughout the latter part of August the *Impérieuse* sailed up and down between Perpignan and Marseilles, harrying the coast of Languedoc. To set fire to farms and villages along the coast he made use of a new invention—the Congreve rocket. This was an incendiary rocket with a range of 3,000 yards, consisting of a stout iron cylinder packed with gunpowder. Soon terror reigned in little ports

like Cette, Frontignan and Les Saintes Maries, and the coasting trade was completely suspended.

A less questionable method of carrying the war into the enemy's country was the systematic destruction of the French telegraph organization. The elaborate system of semaphore communication between Marseilles and Toulon was one of the first of its kind. At short intervals along the coast tall signal poles with movable arms were planted ; at each point a few men were stationed to guard the posts and pass on messages. Apart from a few shore batteries the defences were negligible. After a surprise landing at night in boats with muffled rowlocks under the command of Lieutenant Mapleton the defenders would be gagged and bound, while one sailor laid his axe to the semaphore pole, another spiked the light field piece placed beside it, and the officer in charge searched for important papers. On one occasion they captured the code book. It was immediately sent to the blockading squadron off Toulon. Mapleton had received orders to burn all unimportant papers and leave the ashes scattered about, so the French were deceived into thinking that nothing had been carried off. The enemy continued to use the code, with the result that all their coastal signals were read until a new code was adopted some months later, on account of the suspicions which had been aroused.

On September 7th the *Impérieuse* was joined by the *Spartan*. The two ships cruised together for the next fortnight. Sir Jahleel Brenton, the captain of this frigate, was a godly, courageous man, who had made a name for himself by his exploits in these parts. He was of a very different stamp to Cochrane. He never ascribed his successes to his own powers, but invariably

referred them to 'the Great First Cause.' Though notably humane, he bore a grudge against the French as a consequence of having been a prisoner of war for some years. Cochrane could not have hoped for a more energetic collaborator. In Brenton there was none of the vanity and timidity which he discerned in so many of his colleagues. For his part Brenton was equally impressed by Cochrane's brilliant seamanship on that treacherous coast, and the care with which he planned his landings. His words echo Marryat's: "bold and adventurous as Lord Cochrane was, no unnecessary exposure of life was ever permitted under his command. Every circumstance was anticipated, every caution against surprise was taken, every provision of success was made; and in this way he was enabled to accomplish the most daring enterprises with comparatively little danger, and still less actual loss."

The two captains decided to make a landing near Port Vendres at a rocky inlet under the shadow of the eastern Pyrenees. A large force of cavalry and artillery was in the town, fortifications were being thrown up and a battery had been mounted. In view of the superiority of the enemy it was impossible to attack the battery in the usual way. Cochrane therefore persuaded Brenton to join him in one of those unconventional tricks he delighted to play upon the French. The ships' boys of both frigates were rigged out in the red jackets of the marines. They were put into a number of small boats and told to set off as noisily as possible to a point some distance from the battery. Believing that a landing was about to be made, the French cavalry galloped off to meet these boats. Thereupon the real landing party put off under the protection of the

ships, which stood close in to the shore and opened up their broadsides with a hideous crash. The shore party no sooner reached the battery than the defenders fled. Guns were spiked, mountings dismantled, and a return was made to the boats. At that moment the cavalry appeared, galloping back from their fool's errand. They formed a point blank mark for the ship's guns. The leading dragoons were swept with a withering fire; those in the rear rode off as fast as they could, while the shore parties pulled slowly back to their respective ships.

The chief difficulty about cruising along a hostile coast in the height of summer was shortage of water. A midshipman and his party was always being sent ashore to fill the water butts—no easy task on a coast alive with troops. Wells were hard to find, and a water butt is a clumsy thing to carry about the countryside. On one occasion the problem was solved in an eminently satisfying manner. The mouth of the Rhone is a sparsely populated district where the water is brackish. Orders were given to sew two studding sails together to form an immense watertight bag. Two boats pulled up river till they came to fresh water, filled the bag and towed it back to the ship. The drinking water was then pumped up from the bag into the casks by means of the fire engine hose.

A few weeks later the *Impérieuse* was again off the coast of Catalonia. The weakest point on the road from France lay just south of Port Vendres, where the mountains run down to the sea. Here, in the convenient roadstead of the Gulf of Rosas, five miles south of the frontier, the ship anchored on November 21st, 1808.

From the captain of the 74-gun ship *Fame*, which had

been there for the past few weeks, Cochrane learned that two thousand Italian conscripts had occupied the heights around the bay, but that the town of Rosas and the Castle of Trinidad above it still held out. Earlier that month another ship of the line, the *Excellent*, had landed marines, but they had been unable to silence the batteries on the cliffs, which had reduced the castle to such a state of ruin that evacuation appeared to be imperative.

Cochrane rowed ashore to inspect the position which Captain West declared to be untenable. A battery of six 24-pounders kept up an unceasing fire on the fortifications of the castle from a hill three hundred yards inland. The garrison could make no reply because they were without cannon ; but between the enemy's position and the castle lay a deep chasm which made assault from that side impossible. Marryat describes the situation thus : "Every part of the castle was in ruins. Heaps of crumbling stones and rubbish, broken gun carriages, and split guns, presented to my mind a very unfavourable field of battle. . . . There was another and very serious disadvantage attending our locality. The castle was situated very near the summit of a steep hill, the upper part of which was in the possession of the enemy, who were, by this means, nearly on a level with the top of the castle, and on that eminence three hundred Swiss sharpshooters had effected a lodgment, and thrown up works within fifty yards of us, keeping up a constant fire at the castle. If a head was seen above the walls, twenty rifle bullets whizzed at it in a moment, and the same unremitted attention was paid to our boats as they landed."

Yet Cochrane returned with the conviction that the

castle need not be evacuated immediately, especially as a relief force from the Junta of Gerona was said to be fighting its way north. The force at his disposal was tiny, compared with the six thousand enemy regulars at the neighbouring town of Figueras. To hold the castle the allies had the crews of the frigate and two small bomb ketches, *Lucifer* and *Meteor*, anchored in the bay after the departure of the *Fame*, together with the eighty Spaniards left in the castle.

Fifty seamen and thirty marines under Lieutenant Hoare and Urry Johnson landed to reinforce this garrison. On November 24th, Cochrane and Marryat landed with another party. Boat after boat followed with ammunition, guns, small arms, axes, chains and sailcloth. English and Spaniard toiled together for the next few days to strengthen the position. Timber was collected for the construction of an enormous man-trap between the inner and outer walls, under which dynamite charges were laid to blow up the invaders as they entered. In another place the arch inside the outer wall was blown up and a slope of planks constructed leading down to a chasm in the rocks. The surface was greased with cook's slush from the ship, so that those entering by the breach would toboggan down it to their destruction. 'A very good bug trap,' Marryat calls it. One party repaired a breach with rubble ; others mounted guns from the frigate into the embrasures ; others cut up the sailcloth into bags filled with concrete. A thousand such bags were placed along the foot of the wall to reinforce it against bombardment. Cochrane's ingenuity even went so far as to invent something like barbed wire : he festooned the outworks with the ship's chains, inserting fishhooks into the links.

The Captain directed operations with his usual energy. Marryat and Stovin and Stewart were sent hither and thither with messages to Mr. Lodovick the carpenter and Mr. Burney the gunner, who superintended the working parties. All this had to be done under constant fire from the battery and the snipers. A man risked his life if he emerged for a moment from behind the parapet. Cochrane did so, and a shot struck a stone beside him, crushing his nose with a splinter. Guthrie, the ship's doctor, relieved the pain with fomentations, but as the splinter had entered his mouth he suffered acutely for many days. The broken nose shows clearly in all later portraits, a memento of this heroic siege.

Marryat tells a story which illustrates perfectly the relationship between the boy and his captain at this time. "While he himself walked leisurely along through a shower of musket balls from those cursed Swiss dogs, whom I most fervently wished at the devil, as an aide-de-camp, I felt bound in honour as well as duty to walk by the side of my captain, fully expecting every moment that a rifle ball would have hit me where I should have been ashamed to show the scar. I thought this funeral pace confounded nonsense ; but my fire-eating captain never had run away from a Frenchman, and did not intend to begin then.

"I was behind him, making these reflections, and as the shot began to fly very thick, I stepped up alongside of him and, by degrees, brought him between me and the fire.

" ' Sir,' said I, ' as I am only a midshipman, I don't care so much about honour as you do ; and therefore, if it makes no difference to you, I'll take the liberty of getting under your lee.'

“He laughed and said, ‘I did not know you were here, for I meant you should have gone with the others ; but, since you are out of your station, Mr. Mildmay, I will make that use of you which you so ingeniously proposed to make of me. My life may be of some importance here ; but yours very little ; and another midshipman can be had from the ship only for the asking ; so just drop astern, if you please, and do duty as breastwork for me !”

“ ‘ Certainly, sir,’ said I, ‘ by all means ’ ; and I took up my station accordingly.”

They held the castle for a fortnight. The concrete bags proved their salvation. What would have happened without them could be seen from the fate of the town below. With mathematical precision which won even Cochrane’s admiration, the French gunners literally undermined the walls with cannon balls, until the superstructure collapsed in a cloud of dust and mortar. The town was then carried by the infantry, who pushed forward their right flank to erect a palisade in order to cut off the garrison from the beach. On November 29th the citadel was completely isolated.

At dawn on the 30th the French prepared a final assault. The batteries were silenced to lull the defenders into a sense of security and a thousand men crept up the hill under cover of darkness. The leading men were on the point of placing scaling ladders against the walls when something occurred to spoil the effect of their surprise.

Cochrane says that he happened to wake early that morning. He took a turn along the ramparts, nodded to the sleepy sentries, and then, just to amuse himself, touched off a mortar which happened to be pointing

in the direction of the advancing troops. The detonation was answered by a crackle of musketry. Defenders leaped to arms in time to man the walls and repel the attack. The enemy left fifty dead outside the fort, including the gallant officer who led the attack. Of the defenders, only three were killed and seven wounded.

But Cochrane is inclined to exaggerate. Marryat's account of the siege tallies in every particular with that of his superior, except in a less dramatic, but more probable, story of how the surprise was discovered. He represents his hero, probably meaning himself, as keeping the morning watch on the castle wall, looking over the misty valley below. "The captain came out and asked me what I was looking at. I told him I hardly knew ; but there did appear something unusual in the valley, immediately below the breach. He listened a moment, looked attentively with his night-glass, and exclaimed in his firm voice, but in an under-toned manner, 'To arms!—they are coming!' In three minutes every man was at his post ; and though all were quick there was no time to spare, for by this time the black column of the enemy was distinctly visible, curling along the valley like a great centipede ; and, with the daring enterprise so common among the troops of Napoleon, had begun in silence to mount the breach."

After this surprise attack had failed there was a pause in hostilities for a few days, the French being engaged in erecting a new battery to command the beach. Well directed broadsides from the *Impérieuse* silenced it and smashed the palisades. Once more the line of retreat from the castle was free. But on December 3rd, a gale blew up which forced the ship to drag her

anchor. Knowing that the enemy were only reserving their forces for another assault, Cochrane reluctantly decided to evacuate. On the 4th a terrific bombardment preluded a final attack. By the end of the day the breach was practicable and the next morning large forces were seen assembling to storm the fort. Further defence was useless. Signals were made to the *Impériouse* and the *Fame*, which had just returned with the *Magnificent*, to send boats ashore to take off the defenders. Under the protection of gunfire from the ships, the embarkation was carried out with few casualties. Cochrane and Mr. Burney remained behind to fire the explosive man-trap. As they were rowed off in the last boat, a terrific explosion blew up the seaward part of the castle. Unfortunately the French, suspecting a mine, had hesitated before entering the deserted ruin. When they did take possession of the castle, one ragged tower was all that remained standing.

‘In this instance,’ writes Marryat proudly, ‘a mere handful of seamen detained the whole French army for more than six weeks.’ The account in his log is disappointingly brief, but he tells of one curious incident. One of the sailors rowing ashore received a musket ball in his skull. He was taken back to the ship, where Guthrie trepanned his head—of course without anæsthetics. He found that it was necessary to cut away part of the brain. ‘The man’s life was saved and the effect was not idiocy, as might be conjectured, but a paralysis of the left side.’

‘As to the officers, seamen and marines of this ship,’ runs Cochrane’s despatch of December 5th, ‘the fatigues they underwent, and the gallant manner in which they behaved, deserve every praise. I must,

however, particularly mention Lieut. Urry Johnson of the navy, Lieut. Hore of the marines, Mr. Burney the gunner, Mr. Lodovick, carpenter, and Messrs. Stewart, Stovin and Marryat, midshipmen.'

Though Rosas had fallen, the French had not seen the last of the *Impérieuse*. The problem of obtaining supplies for the army of occupation became daily more urgent. The inhabitants, animated by a fierce hatred of the invaders, refused to contribute to their upkeep. The road from France continued to be harassed by guerilla bands. War materials and essential food-stuffs had to be brought down by convoys of ships, which hugged the shore to escape the attention of hostile cruisers. A few days after Christmas news reached the *Impérieuse* that one such convoy of eleven wheat ships had put into Cadaques harbour, a few miles north of Rosas.

They found the convoy anchored in a narrow inlet, not more than half a mile wide at the entrance and flanked by precipitous rocks. A cutter mounting seven guns, and a lugger with six, guarded the ships, while Swiss sharpshooters lined the hills overlooking the harbour. It would be suicidal to send in boats to cut out the vessels in the usual manner. It appeared equally dangerous to take the frigate in, for there was hardly room to warp her round in order to bring a broadside to bear. But it was unthinkable to let such a convoy escape unharmed.

Before daylight on December 31st, the frigate anchored outside the entrance of the harbour. Decks were cleared for action and boats lowered to tow the ship in. At half-past ten the silence of the morning was shattered by a broadside of fourteen guns. Before the echoes had died away among the hills, the French captains decided

to abandon the gunboats. They turned their own guns down the hatchways and sank the ships before boarders could reach them. Having thus disposed of the guardians, the *Impérieuse* moved in among the traders. Snipers spattered her decks with bullets, but nothing could prevent the seamen from boarding. Meanwhile a party of marines was sent in another direction to divert attention, while others rushed the battery and spiked the guns. Before nightfall prize crews were on board every vessel in the harbour.

Cochrane was angry at the loss of the gunboats. "Very beautiful vessels," Marryat calls them, "and of a character much wanted in the peculiar warfare in which we were engaged." The next day it was decided to raise them. But first the snipers among the rocks must be dislodged. The ship trembled as salvo after salvo was fired at them in vain. At length an intelligent gunner discovered that by aiming at the rocks *above* those behind which the sharpshooters were hidden a cannon ball had the effect of a shell and stone splinters flew off in every direction. A few salvos of this type drove the enemy from the hills and salvage work could be undertaken in safety.

When at length they were raised, the ships were towed ashore, careened, and their bottoms caulked. With jury masts rigged they were soon as seaworthy as before. One of them, the *Julie*, was sent back to Gibraltar under the command of Houston Stewart. Contrary winds delayed him, so that he reached port after the *Impérieuse* had sailed for England. Because of this he missed the greatest excitement of all—the battle in the Aix Roads three months later. Cochrane purchased the *Julie* after she had been condemned as fair prize; he

converted her into a private yacht and sailed to Malta in her two years later.

They spent ten days in Cadaques harbour, suffering no further interference from the French. This time the Spaniards caused trouble. As soon as news of the capture of the wheat ships reached neighbouring villages, swarms of little boats appeared upon the scene. Some of their occupants even managed to clamber on board to plunder the cargo. After they had been beaten off Cochrane decided to sell the vessels there and then to the townspeople. Payment was made in bags of silver dollars, which were divided up amongst the crew at the capstan head. 'To get your whack,' as the sailors said, to jingle a few coins in the hand, was infinitely preferable to waiting months for the dubious payments made by a Prize Court.

Leaving Cadaques on January 8th, 1809, the frigate stood towards the neighbouring town of Selda, the modern Puerto de la Selva de Mar. The landing party had not finished dismantling a battery there before three regiments marched up from Rosas. Marryat writes :

'1809, Jan. 9th.—Ran into Port Selda, drove French from batteries, employed getting brass guns off, marines repulsed and embarked. One man made prisoner, five wounded—got off four brass guns.'

The *Impérieuse* was anchored close in shore. Guns brought up by the troops were trained on her and a heavy bombardment opened. Escape was essential, but at that moment the breeze dropped. To lie under heavy artillery fire in a flat calm is not a pleasant way of spending the afternoon. But Cochrane had anticipated just such a predicament. He had taken the precaution to lay a kedge a mile out to sea. By hauling

in the rope on the capstan the frigate was drawn slowly out of range. A brilliant piece of seamanship, which must have enraged those who witnessed it from the shore.

The ship came to in safe water for the night. That evening a boat came alongside with a message from the Swiss Commandant. After a bombastic recital of his own achievements he had the effrontery to ask Cochrane for six bottles of rum. "I sent him the rum, together with a reply not very complimentary to his country or present occupation." Marryat adds a romantic sequel. According to him, "we sent in the bill about one o'clock in the morning." A few adventurous blades stripped to swim out and surprise the battery. Finding the guard already in a drunken stupor, they seized their muskets and jumped into a boat drawn up on the beach. The splash of oars awakened the sentries, who opened fire on their bodies glistening white in the moonlight. Two of the occupants of the boat jumped overboard to swim back to the ship; the others escaped by pulling out as hard as they could.

The frigate had now been eighteen months on very active service. Hardly a single member of the crew had escaped without some wound to remind him of their adventures. Marryat himself had been three times wounded in the stomach. Once, in boarding a vessel, he received a bayonet thrust in the fierce hand to hand fighting on deck. In the excitement of the struggle he did not consider the wound serious. But when he returned to the frigate and pulled off his shirt, he felt a flash of pain and the warm trickle of blood. The point of the bayonet had effectually plugged the wound with a piece of his shirt.

Slight wounds such as this were not the most enduring of his memories. That cruise was, for him, the most important episode in his life. His rich experiences at the impressionable age of sixteen provided him with a wealth of material when, twenty years later, he turned to the trade of novelist. The mine was so rich that it took him half a dozen years to exploit it. The full story of that memorable cruise is to be found in *Frank Mildmay*; episodes are used in *The King's Own* and *Peter Simple*; and, at one remove from the realities of history, the romance of a midshipman's life in the Mediterranean is pictured in *Midshipman Easy*. It needed little imagination to improve on the incidents recorded in his log.

In February the *Impérieuse* returned to Gibraltar on her way home. On March 19th they dropped anchor in Plymouth Sound. Cochrane had every reason to be pleased with himself and with his men. In transmitting his despatches to the Admiralty, Collingwood had repeatedly called their Lordships' attention to the frigate's astonishing record. The force used against the French had been altogether disproportionate to the damage done, and there can be no higher praise for a commander than that. Describing the defence of the castle of Trinidad, Collingwood wrote: "The zeal and energy with which he (Lord Cochrane) has maintained that fortress excites the highest admiration. His resources for every exigency have no end." Again: "the success which attends his enterprises clearly indicates with what skill and ability they are conducted, besides keeping the coast in constant alarm, causing a general suspension of trade and harassing a body of troops employed in opposing him." Sir Walter Scott,

in his life of Napoleon, adds that in his opinion "of the errors which the English Government committed in the conduct of the Spanish war, the neglect of this obvious and most important means of annoying the enemy, and advantaging our allies, is the most extraordinary."

Lord Mulgrave, the First Lord, was not impressed. He considered the losses sustained to be so miraculously small in comparison with the damage Cochrane claimed to have done that his lordship must, as usual, have exaggerated the importance of his services. "For these operations," writes the latter, "I never received the slightest acknowledgement from the Admiralty." Worse still, from the point of view of junior officers, not a single man was promoted, far less praised, for work so repeatedly recommended in despatches. "Their fault, or rather misfortune, consisted in having served under my command." Cochrane adds the almost incredible statement that the only sign of official recognition was a complaint that too much powder and ball had been used.

Not till a quarter of a century later was justice done to the men of the *Impérieuse*; and then in the form of fiction at the hands of the young midshipman, who so often sat in the stern sheets of the long boat as they pulled towards the shore in the darkness to cut out yet another prize.

CHAPTER VI

THE BATTLE IN THE AIX ROADS

Success to our sailors that sail on the sea,
Who with Cochrane undaunted, whenever they're wanted,
They'll fight till they die, or gain the victory.

Broadside Ballad of the Battle in the Aix Roads.

THE *Impérieuse* had hardly anchored in the Hamoaze when the semaphore on the Hoe was seen to be signalling to the ship. The Captain was to come ashore immediately. Cochrane obeyed with some misgiving, for it was a peremptory summons. On his landing he was informed that his presence was required in London at the earliest opportunity; their Lordships wished to see him on an important and most secret matter.

In the previous month the Channel Fleet under Lord Gambier had been driven off their blockading station by westerly gales. Seizing his opportunity, Admiral Willaumez, with eight of the line, had slipped out of Brest to join the French squadron at Rochefort. To effect this junction required no little skill. Willaumez had not only to take advantage of Gambier's absence, but he had to slip past Stopford's squadron in the Basque Roads. He succeeded. Then, on some trivial excuse, he was superseded by Admiral Allemand.

This junction of the Brest and Rochefort fleets was the reason for Cochrane's summons. He and Lord Mulgrave were not on the best of terms. Why, then, this

effusive handshaking, this air of secrecy, this unwonted haste? In a few words Mulgrave explained the situation. The combined French fleets now lying in the Charente had received orders to cross the Atlantic to the West Indies. They were to recapture Martinique and thus necessitate a valuable diversion of British forces. Napoleon's idea was almost a repetition of the famous strategic plan which ended so disastrously at Trafalgar. This scheme was also to end fatally in the last battle of the war, the battle in the Aix Roads.

Lord Cochrane would know the coast well from his distinguished service there in the *Pallas* frigate. Furthermore, had he not made a speciality of daring cutting-out schemes and the use of the new incendiary rockets? The destruction of the French fleet now in the Aix Roads was essential. It could only be achieved (and here Lord Mulgrave leaned a little closer) by an attack with fireships. Would Lord Cochrane undertake the command?

Cochrane refused. How could a comparatively junior captain accept such a commission over the heads of all his seniors in the fleet? "The present," replied the First Lord, "is no time for professional etiquette." He personally would arrange everything with the Admiral; Cochrane should have unrestricted control over the fireships; he need fear no opposition in that quarter. Still Cochrane held out. "My lord," returned Mulgrave, "you must go. The Board cannot listen to further refusal or delay." At last he relented. The matter was urgent, and the prospect of a grand attack by fireships under his sole charge was too alluring to be refused.

As a matter of fact Mulgrave's insistence may be

explained by other motives than pure patriotism. The West Indian merchants (among whom was Joseph Marryat, now Member of Parliament for Horsham) had already brought pressure to bear when they heard of the French plan. The prospect of a hostile fleet operating from Fort Royal filled the owners of rich sugar plantations with alarm. Villeneuve had reached Martinique in 1805; Allemand must be prevented from doing so in 1809. But Mulgrave gave Cochrane an even more candid explanation. "You see, Lord Gambier will not take upon himself the responsibility of attack, and the Admiralty is not disposed to bear the onus of failure." In other words, the nation demanded a victory; the merchants demanded protection; but neither the Admiral nor his superiors would risk a defeat. A scapegoat was necessary in case the worst should happen.

Cochrane returned post haste to Plymouth with a personal letter explaining everything to Gambier. He had neither the opportunity nor the inclination to make any changes in his crew. After their work in the Mediterranean, he knew he could rely on every man in the ship. Nor had he any desire to fill up the vacancies left by the deaths of Lieutenant Caulfield and others. The midshipmen he had trained would perform the duties of lieutenants far better than any placemen whom influential politicians might wish to put aboard his ship. However, he decided to take his brother Basil with him as a guest on this, his most perilous venture.

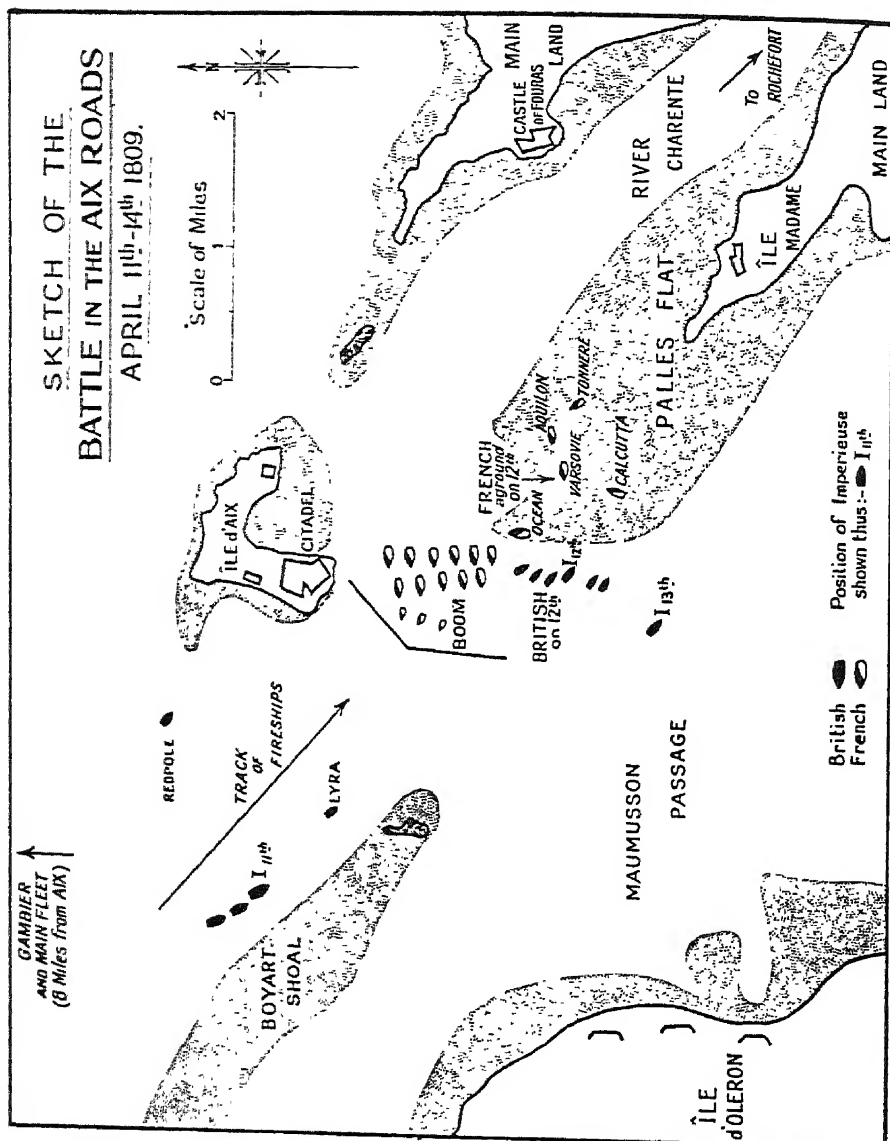
When the *Impérieuse* joined the British fleet in the Basque Roads on April 3rd, Cochrane realised why Gambier hesitated to attack. The British, it is true,

were the larger force. Thirteen ships of the line were anchored in a crescent to prevent the French from coming out. At the north end of the line lay the *Cæsar* (Rear Admiral Stopford); in the centre lay Gambier's flagship, the great *Caledonia*, the biggest ship in the navy, a three-decker mounting 120 guns. In addition to this line of great ships there were seven frigates, four sloops, six gun brigs. Eight old transports and victuallers were lying ready to be transformed into fireships, and twelve more were promised from England. Congreve, the inventor of the rocket, had already arrived with a store of interesting explosives in the *Etna* bomb vessel.

But at first sight the French appeared to be in an impregnable position. Allemand flew his flag in the *Océan* (120 guns); he had under his command ten ships of the line, three frigates, and a huge East Indiaman, the *Calcutta*, captured in 1805; though a three-decker, she carried only 50 guns because she was fitted out as the storeship and magazine vessel for the expedition. She could easily be distinguished from where the British lay. To show the enemy what he thought of them, her captain had hung the Union Jack "under the bowsprit, near the privy." Every man in the fleet appreciated the insult implied by a flag hung in that position.

The strength of the French lay in their position. The river Charente widens at the mouth into a sea passage known as the Aix Roads. To the north lies the island of Aix, fortified with a citadel and a garrison of two thousand soldiers. To the east, on the northern promontory of the mainland, stands the Castle of Fouras, commanding the north bank of the river. Two miles

SKETCH OF THE
BATTLE IN THE AIX ROADS
APRIL 11th-14th 1809.



across the river lies a long mud flat called the Isle Madame, forming the southern bank of the Charente, on which another battery had been placed. Its western extension is the Palles Flat, only visible at low water ; thence the southern bank of the river shelves out seaward in the long Boyart Shoal, lying directly opposite the citadel of Aix, with a sea passage nearly two miles wide between. On the tip of the Boyart nearest the Palles Flat is a rocky excrescence on which a fort was later built. In 1809 the French tried to place a battery there, but were prevented by the fire from an English frigate. Had they succeeded in so doing, this battle would never have taken place, for this was the key position in Cochrane's plan. To the south lies the Isle of Oleron, but its shore defences proved quite ineffective during the action.

It is an historic estuary. Many attempts had been made to destroy earlier Rochefort fleets in these Roads, for the arsenal lies too far up the river to be approached. In 1757 Hawke had led a combined naval and military expedition to land on the Fouras peninsula. On that occasion young Wolfe complained of the indecision of the higher command in exactly the same terms as Cochrane was to complain in 1809. In 1799 another such attempt proved fatal. And later it was at Fouras that Napoleon bade farewell to the mainland of Europe, when he surrendered to a British ship cruising off the Isle d'Aix. In 1809 that ship, the *Bellerophon* (Captain Maitland), formed part of Gambier's line anchored at that identical spot.

Allemand had drawn up his ships in an indented line between Aix and the Boyart Shoal about a mile long, an inner line of six big ships, an outer line of five.

Each ship was moored 170 yards apart from the next, so that she could warp round to bring a full broadside to bear on any ship attempting to force the channel. Seven hundred yards to seaward of this zigzag line of big ships, three frigates were posted as an outer guard. Even though he had the Aix citadel to guard the north end of his line and the Boyart Shoal to guard the south, Allemand did not feel sufficiently secure. A strong tide races through that narrow space ; with the aid of wind and tide the British might come down upon him with preponderating force. To prevent this he had constructed a formidable boom, over a mile in length. Spars, yards, beams and tubs weighted with stone, were securely moored to seaward of the frigates with $5\frac{1}{4}$ ton anchors and $31\frac{1}{2}$ inch cables. The largest anchor in the British fleet only weighed $4\frac{3}{4}$ tons, and a 25 inch cable was the thickest in use.

In view of the position of the batteries, the narrowness of the channels, the strength of the boom and the ubiquitous shoals, we can appreciate Gambier's fears. William Richardson, a gunner in the *Cæsar* who has left a valuable diary of this battle, compares the position of the two fleets by saying that it was as if the French were in Portsmouth Harbour and the British at Spithead. The situation was altogether too formidable for Gambier's queasy stomach. Since his appointment to the Channel Fleet he had been quite inactive. A gentle, courteous man, he had unfortunately already made himself unpopular with his officers. They complained he was 'a blue light,' a canting Evangelical, more interested in saving the souls of his men than in fighting the French. Mass catechisms were held on board the flagship ; godly tracts were always being

distributed through the fleet. It is undeniable that these missionary activities distracted the Admiral's attention from the direction where his duty lay. No soundings had been taken ; no attempt had been made to harass the French. Cochrane found a fleet divided against itself, in no condition to undertake a decisive action.

Gambier welcomed him cordially aboard the *Caledonia*. He himself had no love for the fireships project : " it is a horrible mode of warfare, and the attempt very hazardous, if not desperate." However, here was a bold officer willing to take all responsibility. Cochrane explained that if his fireships did not succeed in total destruction of the enemy, the fleet would be required to stand in to complete the work. But Gambier did not like the idea of a fleet action in those treacherous waters at all. He had a totally exaggerated idea of the strength of the Aix citadel. So had Napoleon. " You may quiet your apprehensions that the enemy will attempt something against Isle d'Aix," he had written with his usual fatuous optimism in naval matters ; " nothing could be more insane than the idea of attacking a French squadron at Isle d'Aix. I am annoyed to see you with such notions."

The fallacy of this attitude, as Cochrane discovered when he took soundings on the night of his arrival, was that the passage was wide enough to allow ships to escape the worst effects of shot from Aix, provided they clung to the edge of the Boyart Shoal. " Vessels of any size might go in and out," he declared ; there was six fathoms off the Boyart and room for six line of battle ships.

There were those in the fleet who thought the same.

When they heard that a junior captain had been commissioned over their heads to do what they had been itching to do for the past three weeks, they were furious. In the commander-in-chief's cabin Cochrane met one such officer, purple with rage. Admiral Sir Eliab Harvey had commanded the 'Fighting' *Temeraire* next astern the *Victory* at Trafalgar. Ever since he had joined Gambier's fleet he had been dissatisfied with the conduct of affairs. Cochrane was shown into the cabin in the middle of a violent quarrel between the two admirals. Harvey's "abuse of Lord Gambier to his face was such as I had never before witnessed from a subordinate."

"I never saw a man so unfit for the command of a fleet as your Lordship," Harvey was shouting. "Instead of sending boats to sound the channels, which I consider the best preparation for an attack, you have been employed, or rather have amused yourself, with mustering the ship's companies (to preach to them) . . . Had Lord Nelson been here he would not have anchored in the Basque Roads at all, but would have dashed at the enemy at once." Gambier made no reply. A minute later Harvey and Cochrane went out on to the quarter deck. There were many officers standing around, but nothing could stop the flood of Harvey's invective. He recollected himself sufficiently to explain that he had nothing personal against Cochrane, but that he regarded it as an insult to the officers in the fleet to be passed over in this manner. Gambier had refused him every satisfaction, "because I am no canting methodist, no hypocrite, no psalm singer, and do not cheat old women out of their estates by hypocrisy and canting!"

Enough of this regrettable scene. Harvey struck

his flag and returned home in high dudgeon. The result of his outburst was inevitable. He was court-martialled and dismissed the service.

While the admirals quarrelled on board the *Caledonia*, excited rumours spread through the fleet. A fireship attack was intended. Notices were posted calling for volunteers, for it was the custom to execute all prisoners taken from such infernal machines. It was indeed a devilish form of warfare, but sanctioned by long tradition. From the time when they scattered the panic-stricken Armada in Calais Roads, occasional use had been made of fireships. But the concatenation of circumstances necessary to manœuvring them with success was extremely rare. Wind, tide, darkness, a fleet at anchor in a confined space—all were essential for their use. Small boats armed with boat hooks, barge poles, grappling irons, could easily push the fireships away from the sides of threatened warships. Allemand himself expected just such an attack. Seventy rowing boats patrolled the boom (which itself should have prevented their approach) and ships had been ordered to carry the minimum of canvas or other inflammable material. Unfortunately for him, the British took advantage of a night when it was impossible for these boats to put to sea.

Cochrane himself had in mind an even more devilish device than the conventional fireship. Again there was a precedent in Gianbelli's 'devil ships' of 1585. Explosion vessels were to be sent ahead of the fireships to destroy the boom and create havoc among the enemy lines; then the fireships would be ignited and set adrift in the direction of the panic-stricken fleet. To serve on board such an explosion vessel was the most dangerous service

a naval officer could perform : a few stray grains of powder, a faulty fuse, and the crew would be literally hoisted with their own petard.

"The service," said Gambier, "became of such hazard as scarcely to admit of a hope of the officers and men ever returning." Thirteen such vessels were fitted out, three of them under Cochrane's own direction. One of the thirteen blew up close to a fireship fitted out by the *Cæsar* ; a lieutenant and one of the crew died from exposure before they were picked up.

Of the vessels under Cochrane's personal supervision, one was manned by his lordship, his brother, Lieutenant Bissell, and four volunteers from the *Impérieuse* ; another by Lieutenant Urry Johnson (aged 21), Midshipman Frederick Marryat (aged 17) and three volunteers ; a third was made fast to the stern of the frigate to be used later in the action. Apart from a vivid page in his first novel, the only documentary evidence we have of Marryat's exploit is the following :

This is to certify that Mr. Frederick Marryat, midshipman of H.M.S. *Impérieuse*, was in the explosion brig under my command in the attack on the enemy's fleet in Basque Roads, on the night of the 11th of April, 1809, and conducted himself very much to his own credit and my entire satisfaction.—U. Johnson, Commander, late Lieutenant, H.M.S. *Impérieuse*.—London, November 10th, 1809.

For a week after the ship had joined every carpenter and gunner in the fleet was engaged in fitting out the fireships. Eight transports and victuallers, together with an old East Indiaman, the *Mediator* of 800 tons, were used. On April 10th the convoy of fireships which had been fitted out in England arrived, having been detained by contrary winds. Their arrival brought the fireship fleet up to a total of twenty-one vessels.

Allemand's despatch proves that he saw what was afoot and took particular precautions to defend his ships. Gunner Richardson describes how one of the victuallers, the *Thomas* of 350 tons, was fitted out : " We made troughs and laid them fore and aft on the 'tween decks, and then others to cross them, and on these were laid trains of quick match ; in the square openings of these troughs we put barrels full of combustible matter, tarred canvas hung over them fastened to the beams, and tarred shavings made out of brooms, and we cut out four portholes in each side for fire to blaze out and a rope of twisted oakum well tarred led up from each of these ports to the stanching rigging and up to the mast heads. We had captured lately several *chasse marées* laden with resin and turpentine, which answered our purpose well. We placed Congreve's rockets at the yard arms, but this was an unwise proceeding, as they were as likely to fly into our boats when escaping, after being set on fire, as into the enemy's." Richardson got his clothes spoiled in the process and applied for a bonus. He was refused. " Such is the encouragement that warrant officers meet with in the Navy ! If an action is fought, though they have the principal duty to do in it, they are seldom mentioned in the captain's letters ; whilst the purser, doctor and boys of midshipmen are greatly applauded, though some of them were no more use in the ship than old women ! "

The vessels Cochrane constructed, in which Marryat was to serve, were even more ingenious contraptions. On the floor of each vessel " were placed a large number of spirit and water casks, into which 1,500 barrels of powder were emptied. These casks were set on end, and the whole bound round with hempen cables so as to

resemble a gigantic mortar, thus causing the explosion to take an upward course. In addition to the powder casks were placed several hundred shells, and over these again nearly 3,000 hand grenades ; the whole, by means of wedges and sand, being compressed as nearly as possible into a solid mass."

Four o'clock, states the log of the *Impérieuse*, "weighed and ran in to the Inner Anchorage (near the Boyart). 5.0 Came to in 9 fathoms." By nightfall on April 11th, all was ready. The officers in command of the fireships had received final instructions on board the *Caledonia*. They were to sail down with the strong tide that was running, ignite the fuses when within convenient distance, lash the helm and loose the ship in the direction of the enemy. As soon as the fuses had been lit the crew of each ship was to climb over the counter into row-boats towed astern. To guide them on their course two lightships had been moored on each side of the channel—the *Redpole* close to the Isle d'Aix, and the *Lyra* near the inner end of the Boyart Shoal. The *Impérieuse* anchored just astern of the latter, about two miles from the boom. Here was a position of comparative safety which goes far to prove how exaggerated was Gambier's talk of red hot shell from the citadel. Some distance astern of her lay three frigates, *Pallas*, *Unicorn* and *Aigle*, to maintain contact with the main fleet lying eight miles out to sea. Finally, to create a diversion, the *Etna* was to throw shell and grenades from 13 inch mortars into Aix from a position just west of the island.

The details of this elaborate scheme were Cochrane's. In the care with which the attack was planned and the courage demanded for its execution it is a worthy

predecessor of the Zeebrugge raid. "A more daring plan," wrote Marryat, "was never made ; and if it partly failed of success, no fault could be imputed to those who conducted the enterprise ; they did all that man could do."

At 8.30 on the evening of April 11th, the attack was launched. With a two knot tide running in the direction of the enemy, conditions for a fireship attack were ideal. Marryat describes his own adventures as follows : "The night was very dark and it blew a strong breeze directly in upon the Isle d'Aix and the enemy's fleet. Two of our frigates (i.e., *Redpole* and *Lyra*) had been previously so placed as to serve as beacons to direct the course of the fireships. They each displayed a clear and brilliant light ; the fireships were directed to pass between these ; after which their course up to the boom which guarded the anchorage was clear.

"I solicited and obtained permission to go on board one of the explosion vessels that were to precede the fireships. They were filled with layers of shells and powder, heaped one upon another ; the quantity on board of each vessel was enormous. Another officer (Johnson), three seamen and myself were all that were on board of her. We had a four oared gig, a small narrow thing (nicknamed by the sailors a 'coffin') to make our escape in.

"Being quite prepared, we started. It was a fearful moment, the wind freshened and whistled through our rigging, and the night was so dark that we could not see our bowsprit. We had only our foresail set ; but with a strong flood tide and a fair wind, with plenty of it, we passed between the advanced frigates like an arrow. It seemed to me like entering the gates of hell. Our

orders were to lay the vessel on the boom which the French had moored to the outer anchors of their ships of the line (actually 800 yards from these, but only 300 yards from the frigates). In a few minutes after passing the frigates we were close to it ; our boat was towing astern, with three men in it—one to hold the rope ready to let go, one to steer, and one to bale the water out, which, from our rapid motion, would otherwise have swamped her. The officer who accompanied me steered the vessel, and I held the match in my hand. We came upon the boom with a horrid crash ; he put the helm down, and laid her broadside to it. The force of the tide acting on the hull, and the wind upon the foresail, made her heel gunwale to, and it was with difficulty I could keep my legs ; at this moment the boat was very near being swamped alongside. They had shifted her astern, and there the tide had almost lifted her over the boom ; by great exertion they got her clear, and lay upon the oars ; the tide and the wind formed a bubbling short sea, which almost buried her. My companion then got into the boat, desiring me to light the port fire and follow.

“ If ever I felt the sensation of fear, it was after I had lighted this port fire, which was connected with the train. Until I was fairly in the boat, and out of reach of the explosion the sensation was horrid. . . . Only one minute and a half of port fire was allowed. I had therefore no time to lose. The moment I had lit it, I laid it down very gently, and then jumped into the gig, with a nimbleness suitable to the occasion. We were off in a moment : I pulled the stroke oar, and I never plied with more zeal in all my life : we were not two hundred yards from her when she exploded.

"A more terrific and beautiful sight cannot be conceived ; but we were not quite enough at our ease to enjoy it. The shells flew up in the air to a prodigious height, some bursting as they rose, and others as they descended. The shower fell about us, but we escaped without injury. We made but little progress against the wind and tide ; and we had the pleasure to run the gauntlet among all the other fireships, which had been ignited, and bore down on us in flames fore and aft."

It is not certain exactly where or when either Marryat's or Cochrane's vessels exploded.* The experience of those on board both these vessels was, of course, very similar. Cochrane describes how his explosion set up a huge wave of water, while rockets and shells burst all around them. His life was saved by an extraordinary incident. As they pulled away, he saw that a dog had been left on board. The fuse was timed to burn fifteen minutes, so there was time to return and take off the animal. Actually, the vessel blew up prematurely, and hence this act of humanity resulted in the shower of explosives passing over their heads. Two fireships passed them as they pulled back, the *Mediator* leading, and steering straight for the boom.

Back on board his ship he learned to his dismay that some of the fireships had been ignited prematurely. One had drifted down on the frigate, to the imminent danger of the third explosion vessel moored astern.

* A witness in the *Lyra* says Cochrane's vessel exploded one mile from the boom ; Cochrane himself says half a mile. At Gambier's court martial it was agreed that the two explosions occurred at 9.30 ; but the log of the *Impérieuse* states "8.00. The first vessel exploded, the Fireships coming down in a very irregular manner, three of them having been lighted at least $\frac{1}{2}$ mile from this ship to windward."

This had to be cut adrift immediately. Marryat makes Frank Mildmay perform the action of cutting the tow at his captain's orders ; but, as this had been done before Cochrane came on board, the incident is obviously fictitious. Meanwhile the errant fireship grounded and harmlessly burned herself out.

Only four of the twenty-one fireships ever reached the enemy's line. At the moment it was impossible to see what damage they had done. At all events the waves set up by the explosions had wrenched the boom from its moorings. But in that night of confusion and darkness, it was impossible for those on board the frigate, with such a distracting firework display going on around them, to see what actually happened. As for the main fleet : "all hands were up on board to behold this spectacle, and the blazing light all around gave us a good view of the enemy, and we really thought we saw some of their ships on fire."

What the French felt about it can be seen from an intercepted letter written by Captain Proteau of the *Indienne*, one of the frigates nearest the boom. "I was in a position $3\frac{1}{2}$ cables from my squadron when I saw at 9.30 under our starboard cat-head something floating at the boom. Suddenly there was an explosion ; a quantity of rockets, grenades and shells exploded in the air without doing us the least harm, although we were within half a cable's length." Then, at 9.45, the flaming *Mediator* broke through the wreckage of the boom, followed by three other fireships, all blazing fore and aft.

The fireships did not, after all, destroy the French fleet. But Cochrane was unduly pessimistic about their results, and hence unduly rude about their mis-

management. Dawn showed the enemy ships driven from their anchorage into a position in which their destruction was certain, had Gambier acted with any resolution whatever. Allemand's ships lay scattered in all directions. At the first approach of the fireships, cables had been cut and ships deserted; Proteau set fire to his ship, while big 74's were abandoned to drift at the mercy of wind and tide. "The next morning the French were seen in a very disastrous state; they had cut their cables and run on shore in every direction, with the exceptions of the flagships, which lay at their anchors and could not move till high water; it was then quarter flood, so that they had five good hours to remain. I refer my readers to the court martial for a history of these events. I shall only observe that had the captains of His Majesty's ships been left to their own judgment, much more would have been attempted, but with what success I do not presume to say."

Marryat is wrong about the flagships. The two remaining ships were the *Foudroyant* and the *Cassard*, and even they ran aground later in the day. What happened to the flagship herself is told by an officer in the *Océan*. "At 10.0 we grounded; and immediately afterwards a fireship in the height of her combustion grappled us athwart our stern. For ten minutes she remained in this situation, while we employed every means in our power to prevent the fire from catching our ship. Our engines played upon and completely soaked the poop; with spars we hove off the fireship, and with axes we cut the lashings of her grapnels fastened to the end of her yards; but the 'chevaux de frise' on her sides held her firmly to us. . . . Two of our line of battle ships, *Tonnerre* and *Patriote*,

at this time fell on board of us. . . . Providence afforded us assistance. At the moment when the fireship began to drive forward along our starboard side the *Tonnerre* disengaged herself from us. Had this not happened the fireship would have fallen into the angle formed by the two ships, and would inevitably have burnt them. . . . All the rest of the night we were surrounded by vessels on fire."

The *Océan* was now aground on the northern end of the Palles Flat. Inside her, "lying on their bilge with their bottoms completely exposed to shot," were the line of battle ships *Varsovie*, *Aquilon*, *Tonnerre*, together with the storeship *Calcutta*. Altogether fifteen ships were aground at various points.

Now was the moment for Gambier to stand in with the fleet. It was April 12th, the anniversary of Rodney's great victory at the Saints. At dawn, the *Impérieuse* weighed. As there was no sign of a similar movement on the part of the fleet, Cochrane hove to and signalled to the *Caledonia*.

"All the enemy's ships, except two, are on shore." The recognition pennant appeared at the masthead of the far distant flagship ; but still no one moved.

"The enemy's ships can be destroyed."

"Half the fleet can destroy the enemy."

The crew of the *Impérieuse* was chafing to attack the *Ocean* ; but for a 38-gun frigate to attack a 120-gun line of battle ship was suicidal. To force Gambier to act before she got off on the flood an impertinent message was hoisted :

"The frigates alone can destroy the enemy."

Still nothing happened. At 9.0 the *Impérieuse* wore

to edge in closer. By 10.0 it was nearly high water. Cochrane signalled despairingly :

“The enemy is preparing to heave off.”

About the same time the straining eyes of Marryat and his fellows discerned a movement in the British fleet. Gambier had at last given orders to weigh. But half an hour later the fleet came to, still, at the lowest computation, some three miles west of Aix—six miles away from the stricken ships. At the court martial the following was the excuse for this criminal piece of cowardice : “As the enemy were on shore, he (Gambier) did not think it necessary to run any unnecessary risk of the fleet, when the object of their destruction seemed to be already obtained.”

One can imagine the feelings of those on board the frigate as they watched this extraordinary hesitation. An officer in another ship speaks of “the indignation which pervaded the whole fleet in witnessing this total want of enterprise and even common sense of duty.” However, the smaller ships in the van were allowed to stand in. The *Etna*, which had been shelling the Aix fortifications all night, took up a position to starboard of the *Impérieuse*. Three gunbrigs were sent to cover her, and Captain John Bligh was ordered to lead in three 74’s—*Valiant*, *Bellona*, *Revenge*—together with a few of the advanced frigates. This movement was sufficient to make the *Cassard*, the one ship to remain at anchor in the main channel, cut her cable ; she promptly ran aground under the guns of Fouras Castle.

Meanwhile Cochrane performed what may be called the bravest act of his career. The *Impérieuse* was allowed to drift stern foremost towards the ships stranded on the Palles Flat, in order to force Gambier’s hand

by giving the impression that the frigate was out of control. Frantic signals were hoisted :

1.40 p.m., Signal No. 378.—“ The enemy is superior to the chasing ship.”

1.45 p.m., Signal No. 364.—“ The ship is in distress and requires to be assisted immediately.”

No reply was vouchsafed. So, without awaiting further assistance, the frigate ran down in the most gallant style. “ My captain,” writes Marryat, “ as soon as he could see his mark, weighed, ran in, and engaged the batteries (on the Isle Madame), while he also directed his guns at the bottom of the enemy’s ships, as they lay on shore on their beam ends.” With a spring on the small bower, the ship warped round to bring her full broadside to bear on the stricken *Calcutta*. At the same time the other big ships which had run on shore, *Varsovie* and *Aquilon*, were engaged with the forecastle guns. Marryat must have cheered with pride at the sight of his frigate engaging three such huge ships simultaneously.

Fortunately help was at hand. The smaller ships of the British van were taking up their positions in a crescent round the Palles Flat, the *Etna* throwing shell from the south and the *Impérieuse* firing in the centre. Far off to the north the guns of the citadel boomed ineffectively. It was a heartening sight to that powder stained crew to see Bligh’s three ships of the line take up their positions at two o’clock. And when the *Indefatigable* frigate came to astern of the *Impérieuse* she was welcomed with a hoarse cheer of delight. “ One of our ships of the line came into action in such gallant trim, that it was glorious to behold. She was a beautiful ship, in what we call ‘ high kelter ’ ; she seemed a

living body, conscious of her own superior power over her opponents, whose shot she despised as they fell thick and fast about her, while she deliberately took up an admirable position for battle. And having furled her sails, and squared her yards, as if she had been at Spithead, her men came down from aloft, went to their guns, and opened such a fire on the enemy's ships and batteries as would have delighted the great Nelson himself."

An hour later the *Calcutta* was abandoned. She never actually struck, so at 4.20 a boat's crew was sent from the *Impérieuse* to take possession. That evening she blew up with a tremendous detonation. A jealous captain states that the loss of this great prize, worth half a million sterling, was due to the fact that Cochrane "sent a young cur on board to use his discretion and the boy set fire to her." But a little midshipman in one of the gunbrigs wrote to his mother to say it was the second lieutenant of his ship who set her alight because she could not be brought off.

"At 3.30 p.m. the *Impérieuse* ceased firing, the crew being thoroughly exhausted ; whilst I," says Cochrane, "was so much so as to be almost unable to stand." The ship had been badly battered, her rigging shot to pieces and holes torn in her sides. Though they had been in the thick of the fighting most of the day and night, only three men had been killed, and eleven wounded, including Marsden the purser and Gilbert the Surgeon's assistant. Two hours later the *Aquilon* and *Varsovie* struck, and the crew of the *Tonnerre* abandoned ship after setting fire to her.

What had happened to the main fleet all this while ? At five in the afternoon the *Cæsar* and *Theseus* (74's)

moved in to the spot where the *Impérieuse* had anchored the previous night. The Aix batteries fired at them as they came into the mouth of the channel, "but we thought so little of that we did not return their fire, although they fired pretty smartly at us with shot and shells, which made the water splash against the ship's sides ; yet (thank God) they never hit, though the passage here is only about a mile wide. Captain Beresford of the *Theseus* had his cow put into the ship's head (or privy) to be out of the way of the guns ; a shot from the enemy killed it, which was the only loss received." Unfortunately Stopford's two ships proved useless, because at 7.0 they stuck fast on the Boyart and did not float off again till 11.0 p.m. From this position their crews were spectators of the "most dreadful explosion" of the *Calcutta* ; "fortunately none of her fiery timbers fell on board our ship ; everything went upwards, with such a field of red fire as illuminated the whole elements. One of our French pilots was so frightened that he dropped down on the deck, and said that if anybody had told him the English had done such things and he had not seen them he would say it was 'one tam lie.'"

Before dawn on April 13th, Stopford launched three more fireships, but the wind was so baffling that all three ran aground. When Cochrane saw the flames he shifted his ship into the Maumusson passage a little to the south. However the mere threat of another fireship attack renewed the panic among the French. Three big ships lay abandoned in midstream, with the exception of a quartermaster, who had hidden himself below decks. Three sailors, all dead drunk, kept him company. An English midshipman, on his return

from taking a message, thought he would see what was happening. As he brought his jolly boat alongside the largest of the three ships there was a shout of "Qui vive?" followed by a musket shot. The Englishmen returned the fire. The quartermaster promptly snatched twenty muskets from the marines' rack and fired them off in turn. Thinking the ship was well manned, the midshipman ordered his men to give way; had he known the truth, that little midshipman with his jolly boat and four men might have taken possession of a three decker and two seventy-fours.

At dawn the officer of the watch on board the *Impérieuse* drew the captain's attention to three lights, the signal for recall, showing on the rigging of the *Cæsar*. Cochrane proposed to turn a blind eye; but the ships to starboard were already preparing to obey. Tired and harassed as he was, he tried to persuade them to remain. The attack could be renewed in the growing light. As the *Indefatigable* passed on her way out he hailed her. Would she attack the *Ocean* on one quarter while they attacked on the other? Her captain's reply was, "I am going out to join the fleet."

The next ship was Cochrane's old frigate, the *Pallas*. Her captain asked him whether the two ships could not remain. Joyfully Cochrane agreed and prevailed on a few sloops, including the *Etna*, to do the same. With the prospect of a renewal of action there was an immediate bustle to clear the decks. Men tumbled up from below to cut away the wreckage, caulk the worst holes, and fish the foremast, which had been damaged by shot. The smaller ships had already opened a desultory fire, when the two frigates found that they could not

move from their anchorages. Wind and tide had turned against them.

At noon the *Redpole* arrived with a message from the fleet :

My dear Lord,—You have done your part so admirably that I will not suffer you to tarnish it by attempting impossibilities. You must therefore join as soon as you can. . . .—Gambier.

To this astonishing document Cochrane replied :

My Lord,—I have just had the honour to receive your Lordship's letter. We *can* destroy the ships that are on shore, which I hope your Lordship will approve of.

Dusk was gathering. At 7.0 the other ships complied with the orders of the Commander in Chief. "Weighed with whole squadron and went out of range of shell, *Impérieuse* excepted, being on the ground. 9.30 Floated," runs the log.

The morning of the 14th found them still close to the Boyart. To the east they could see boats taking stores off the derelict ships ; to the west the recall signal still fluttered from the foremast of the *Caledonia*. "Shall we unmoor?" asked Cochrane, a trifle unnecessarily. The reply, which arrived about mid-day, was preremptory :

My dear Lord,—It is necessary I should have some communication with you before I close my dispatches to the Admiralty. I have, therefore, ordered Captain Wolfe to relieve you in the services you are engaged in. I wish you to join me as soon as possible.

At 4.30 p.m., the *Impérieuse* reluctantly weighed to rejoin the fleet.

Back on board the *Caledonia* there was an angry scene between the Admiral and his stubborn subordinate. Cochrane appealed once more that the fleet, or at least part of it, should be sent in ; if that was not done he declared it would be impossible 'to prevent a noise being made in England.' To this veiled threat Gambier replied that, if there was a scandal, Cochrane would appear to be arrogantly claiming all the merit for himself. After this the latter was not surprised to learn that he was to return home immediately. On the 15th the *Impérieuse* sailed for England, arriving at Spithead on the 21st.

So ended Marryat's one and only experience of a big fleet action. Not an action in the classic style of the eighteenth century, when rival fleets sailed past each other on opposite tacks, cannonading furiously with little effect ; but a far more exciting battle, fought under darkness illuminated by the lurid glow of fire-ships close to a dangerous lee shore. The battle in the Aix Roads is not one of the nation's most famous naval victories ; but it was certainly one of the most brilliant displays of courage and intelligence ever shown by British seamen. It is well that the novelist of the Old Navy should have borne so gallant a part in such a fight.

The tumult died, but not the shouting. More ink has been wasted on the aftermath of this victory than on any other, Jutland always excepted. Fortunately we need not recount the sorry story in any detail. Suffice it to say that Cochrane's impetuous temper did not permit him to countenance any false idea as

to Gambier's part in that memorable scene. It was the first big victory the nation had enjoyed for four years. The country went wild with enthusiasm. Ballads were composed (significantly omitting Gambier's name) ; medals were struck ; prints, which look like advertisements for a Crystal Palace firework display, were struck off as fast as highly imaginative artists could engrave them. Even if no prizes had been taken out of the ten French ships of the line, three had been burned and three rendered unfit for further service ; of the frigates, one had been burned and one wrecked. Allemand was replaced by Ganteaume, who promptly dismantled the squadron to make a defence for the estuary. Gambier might have repeated the battle of the Nile ; Cochrane at least rendered the Rochefort squadron unfit for further service.

But from the first there were suspicions that everything had not been done which might have been done. When Cochrane learned that an official vote of thanks was to be tendered to Gambier in recognition of his services, he determined to oppose it. Gambier very properly demanded a court martial on his own conduct. He was tried at Portsmouth in July on the charge of neglecting to take effectual measures for destroying the enemy fleet. The minutes provide a sorry picture of official justice. From the first, the president was biased in favour of the accused. A skilful lawyer, versed in the technicalities of procedure, set aside most of the leading questions as out of order. Witnesses, such as Captain Maitland, who shared Cochrane's view, were providentially on distant stations. Indeed an attempt was made to get Cochrane himself out of the way by offering him the bribe of a command in the

Mediterranean. The chart which he himself had taken off the *Varsovie* was set aside as spurious, and highly inaccurate sketches drawn up on hearsay by men who had never taken the soundings were used instead.

The result was inevitable. Gambier was acquitted, and Cochrane was not again employed in one of his Majesty's ships for forty years. The official attitude towards Marryat's hero is shown in a letter from the insufferable Hannah More to the First Lord, Lord Barham, in 1810.

What a tempestuous world do we live in! Yet terrible as Buonaparte is in every point of view, I do not fear him so much as those domestic mischiefs—Burdett, Cochrane, Wardle and Cobbett. I hope, however, that the mortification Cochrane, etc., have lately experienced in their base and impotent endeavours to pull down reputations which they found unassailable will keep them down a little.

The best comment on the whole affair is a remark made by Napoleon at St. Helena. O'Meara had suggested that Cochrane, if properly supported, could have destroyed the whole French fleet. "He could not only have destroyed them," returned the Emperor, "but he might and would have taken them out. . . . The French admiral was imbecile, but yours was just as bad. I assure you that if Cochrane had been supported, he would have taken every one of the ships."

Forty years later it was decided to award a Naval General Service Medal to every survivor of the Napoleonic wars. Marryat was promised the medal

for the part he had played in the Aix Roads, but he died before the medal was actually issued. The surviving members of the crew of the *Impérieuse* went unrewarded because the butcher's bill was not considered high enough.

CHAPTER VII

WALCHEREN

Great Chatham, with his sabre drawn,
 Stood waiting for Sir Richard Strachan ;
Sir Richard, longing to be at 'em,
 Stood waiting for the Earl of Chatham.

BEFORE the Gambier court martial was held, the *Impérieuse* had sailed on another cruise. As Cochrane had to be present at the trial an acting captain, Captain Thomas Garth, took command in June, 1809. Under him Marryat sailed on his fourth cruise. He was now seventeen years old. Few other midshipmen of his age can have had such a record of active service. But never again was he to serve under such a brilliant officer as Cochrane. As we now take leave of his lordship it will be as well to record his estimate of Marryat as a midshipman : "He was brave, zealous, intelligent and even thoughtful, yet active in the performance of his duties."

For the past few months the British Government had been aware of the fact that Napoleon was busy transforming Antwerp and Flushing into a major naval base. His lavish expenditure on these towns shows that he wished to make the North Sea the scene of future naval operations ; in this area he could use his fleet to support the Grand Army in Germany. Ten ships of the line rode at anchor in the Scheldt ; on every one

of the nineteen slips in the Antwerp yards new vessels were building. The existence of such a force within striking distance of our shores constituted a menace which had to be removed without delay. In May it was decided to send a big naval and military expedition to the Low Countries.

The Walcheren expedition was one of those abortive enterprises the wrecks of which strew our national history from the time of La Rochelle to that of the Dardanelles. It was a colossal and expensive failure. Yet, like the other expeditions, it was undertaken with every chance of success. It was the largest force ever sent from these shores before the Crimean War ; 245 vessels of war, including 33 ships of the line and 23 of the finest frigates in the fleet. The troops were 40,000 strong, including 3,000 cavalry accommodated on the lower decks of the big ships.

The expedition is usually described as being ill timed, ill planned, ill led. But modern strategic authorities regard it as a brilliant stroke, at least in conception. It was not, as is generally stated, an open secret from the first ; only the Opposition press thought so. Decrès' correspondence in the French War Office proves that the Minister of War was convinced to the last moment that the whole thing was a gigantic piece of bluff, and that the real object of the expedition was the Baltic. Thus the news that the British had landed did not reach Napoleon until August 7th, two days after Wagram and over a week after the landing had taken place. The Emperor was appalled. There were only 600 men on the island at the time. Bernadotte was immediately dispatched to Antwerp and 35,000 men thrown into the town. "In all my Empire," he

confessed, "this is the weakest spot, and the only one at which it is possible to deal me a blow." For at least three weeks Antwerp lay at our mercy.

The reason why the plan failed lay in the character of the Commander in Chief. The Earl of Chatham was known to be a lazy old man—"le plus temporisateur des généraux de l'armée Britannique," the French military experts called him. It was common knowledge that he took more care about his health and the quality of his turtle soup than in the details of military operations. "It is really a deplorable thing," complains one of the frigate captains, "to send Lord Chatham and a tribe of generals whose names are scarcely known out of St. James'." But the rhyme which has immortalised this sad affair does scant justice to the naval commander in chief. Sir Richard Strachan had neither originality nor imagination ; but he did what he had to do in the most competent fashion. It was not the fault of the Navy that the expedition petered out in such an inglorious fashion.

On July 26th the *Impérieuse* sailed from Portsmouth in company with a formidable armada. Having picked up Strachan's squadron in the Downs, the whole fleet stood towards the Dutch coast. On the 29th they were off the mouths of the Scheldt. A landing was impossible because it was blowing half a gale and the surf was breaking on the sandy flats of Walcheren. The seasick troops spent a thoroughly unpleasant twenty-four hours while the ships hove to, much to the amusement of the sailors. Next morning, however, the wind dropped and there was every promise of a glorious summer's day.

Picket boats were lowered to tow flat bottomed boats

laden with soldiers towards the beach. To prevent the possibility of any interference, the *Impérieuse* and other frigates stood close in to the shore to cover the landings. "It was a grand sight to see so many heroes in boats extending for miles, dashing along to meet their enemies on a foreign shore," writes one enthusiast. "I never saw so novel and picturesque a sight," wrote Marryat of what he could see from the deck of the frigate; "the men were first sent on shore with their saddles and bridles; the horses were then lowered into the water in running slings, which were slipped clear off them in a moment; as soon as they found themselves free, they swam away for the shore, which they saluted with a loud neigh as soon as they landed. In the space of a quarter of a mile we had three or four hundred horses in the water, all swimming for the shore at the same time; while their anxious riders stood on the beach waiting their arrival."

The island of Walcheren lies between the East and West Scheldt. Landings were made from both channels, and the next day Middleburg surrendered without firing a shot. The army then settled down to invest Flushing, the only other important town on the island. To cover their advance the fleet anchored off the town. By Sunday, August 13th, everything was ready and a fleet bombardment began. It was a magnificent sight, such as Marryat had never seen before. All day long "a tremendous roar was kept up with shell, shot, rockets and musketry, enough to tear the place to pieces." A smart gun-crew, under the command of a new officer, Lieutenant Travers, was sent ashore from the *Impérieuse*. Their battery of six 24-pounders was the most advanced of all, and they had opened fire long

before the Royal Artillery had finished running about collecting materials for gun emplacements. Indeed an artillery officer was so impressed by their performance that he wrote : "the seamen are all engineers, and manage the batteries as well, I had almost said better than any of our artillery officers." By nightfall a large part of the town was in flames. The guns of the fleet had done their work so well that a general assault proved unnecessary. On the 15th the French garrison surrendered.

Flushing was the second big town to fall within three weeks of their arrival. It might have fallen sooner, for even on August 8th a diarist notes that "the wise ones afloat begin to accuse the Earl of Chatham of dilatoriness." Now began one of those fatal delays so reminiscent of the Dardanelles expedition. For three weeks Chatham remained where he was. This allowed the French time to construct a boom across the river at Fort Lillo, nine miles from Antwerp. From where the *Impérieuse* lay, the topmasts of ten enemy ships of the line could easily be distinguished behind it. Strachan longed to attack without more delay, but Chatham spoke soothingly of the necessity of consolidating the position.

At length, on September 5th, Strachan lost patience : "Damn me, if the army won't go, we must." The advanced squadron, which included the frigates, was sent up river to reconnoitre the boom. They returned with bad news. All the way up they had been harassed with red hot shell fired from the forts along the banks ; Lillo was stronger than had been anticipated ; as for Antwerp, the fortifications had been so strengthened recently that the town was regarded as impregnable. Chatham had lost his opportunity. So at least thought

all the naval officers. Marryat and Chamier (like Marryat, a midshipman and later a rival novelist), beside a score of older hands, are clearly of the opinion that if a strong force had pushed on after the reduction of Flushing, success would have been certain.

The new captain of the *Impérieuse* had none of Cochrane's initiative. He was content to do what he was told, to protect the landings and bombard the forts with rockets, but no more. Cochrane, of course, had drawn up an elaborate plan based on his experience in the Aix Roads. The Admiralty would have none of it. From the moment he accused Gambier, Cochrane was a marked man. He had made matters worse by doing something quite unprecedented for a naval officer—attending the meetings of parliamentary reformers like Cobbett and old Major Cartwright at the Crown and Anchor tavern in the Strand. But Midshipman Stewart, who had been left behind at Gibraltar with the *Julie*, managed to save something out of the wreck of these plans. He persuaded Garth to adopt Cochrane's method of firing explosive shell from the main deck guns. These new Shrapnel shells, the invention of Lieutenant General Shrapnel, were cases filled with bullets and an explosive charge fired by a time fuse. Another modern weapon to be tried out on this expedition was the torpedo or 'submarine carcass.' Each 'carcass' contained 500 lbs. of powder. "There is a piece of clockwork fixed to each which you must set to the number of minutes you suppose it to require in reaching the ship's bottom. It then blows up, and 'tis said, will blow a hole in a line of battle ship's bottom. . . . For our part," writes a gunner in the

Cæsar, "we never tried them—indeed, our Admiral said it was not a fair proceeding."*

The only occasion on which the *Impérieuse* distinguished herself was due to a navigational error. Her master, John Spurling, who had so skilfully navigated the ship in the Aix Roads when the French were running aground in every direction, was in England giving evidence at the Court Martial. Her acting Master seems to have been no more competent than her acting Captain. The day after the fall of Flushing he took the ship down a side channel by mistake. The Terneuse battery on the opposite bank promptly opened fire with red hot shell. The *Impérieuse* replied with shrapnel fired from the forecastle carronades. By an astounding piece of luck one shell exploded in the middle of the enemy's magazine. Three thousand barrels of gunpowder blew up with a tremendous roar. The battery was silenced and the frigate regained the main channel in safety.

Marryat and his friends spent most of that hot, wet August exploring the Dutch countryside, spoiling orchards and robbing hen roosts to carry a squawking fowl back to the mess. The seamen, to the astonished amusement of the military, wandered about the island in gangs 'like strings of donkeys.' Hunting Frenchmen was their pastime. Whenever a sniper or a stranded detachment was sighted, off they went over dykes and ditches, yelling like a pack of hounds and madly firing pistols into the air. The sight of parties of pig-tailed giants under the nominal command of tiny midshipmen was inexpressibly comic to the professional soldier. Seamen loved 'playing at sodgers,' but they made

* Compare the fate of the secret invention submitted by Cochrane to a committee in 1811. It was agreed that the device was indeed "infallible and irresistible, but too inhuman in its results."

no attempt to behave like disciplined troops. "I'll not stand this!" a giant in the front rank was heard to exclaim, "if I do, beat me; here is this bl . . . y Murphy stickin' a cutlass into my starn!"

These shore expeditions killed more men than all the enemy troops in Europe. The dreaded Walcheren or 'polder' fever, contracted from mosquitoes bred in those damp low-lying flats, spread with alarming rapidity. Some said it was due to bad drinking water; but, as one sailor remarks, "for my part I thought it as good as any I had ever drunk, and had many a good swig at it; how fantastical are some people!" Figures on the sick list mounted as the idle weeks dragged by in the rain. On September 19th it was reported that 9,000 men were sick of the fever. Marryat soon joined the ranks of shivering wretches, who clutched their great coats about them, even though the season was high summer.

The strengthening of Antwerp, and the decimation of his troops by the fever, gave Chatham the excuse he had long desired. On August 26th a Council of War decided to abandon the expedition. On September 14th Chatham himself returned to England. In the ensuing weeks dribblets of men were invalided home. Marryat was one of the more fortunate, returning home in the *Victorious* (74, Captain Hammond) in October. Walcheren, he decided, "with its ophthalmia and its agues, was no longer a place for a gentleman." The rest of the army was left to die by inches on the sodden mud flats. It was not till the end of November that the final evacuation began, after forts and dockyards had been blown up. At last, on December 22nd, the fleet weighed anchor to return home.

WALCHEREN

The wretched business had dragged out to an inglorious conclusion. Out of the 40,000 men sent to Walcheren, 14,000 were in hospital with the fever at one time or another. Of the 4,000 who died in the course of that autumn, only 106 were killed in action. Though Marryat himself was fortunate enough to make a rapid recovery, the vast majority of those attacked by the fever remained paralysed, or subject to recurrent fits of ague, for the rest of their lives. The expedition cost the country nearly a million sterling ; it achieved exactly nothing.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MEDITERRANEAN FLEET

“It was a glorious sight to see our ships standing close to the enemy’s harbour, and manœuvring within gunshot of a closely blockaded and superior fleet; there the hostile tricolor flag was displayed from fort and vessel; but ours swept the sea, and floated from the peaks of twenty-four sail of the line.”—CHAMIER.

THE Walcheren expedition concluded Marryat’s service in the *Impérieuse*. On her return to England Captain Hon. Henry Duncan, son of the admiral, was appointed to the frigate in place of Cochrane; under his command she fades from the pages of history.

Marryat was seriously ill of the fever when he returned to England. But he was only permitted one day ashore before he was appointed to his first line of battle ship—the *Centaur*, 74 guns (Captain Webley). Curiously enough he was rated an Able Seaman until March 1810, presumably because the ship already carried her full complement of midshipmen. The *Centaur* was the flagship of Admiral Sir Samuel Hood, a cousin of the famous Viscount Hood. She had returned that spring from Corunna, where Hood had been second in command when the fleet took off Sir John Moore’s troops after the celebrated retreat. A few days after Marryat had joined, Hood received orders to join the fleet in the Mediterranean.

The next eighteen months form one of the dullest periods of Marryat’s life at sea. The blockaded

squadron at Toulon showed no signs of fight. Ever since the year of Trafalgar Collingwood had waited for a chance of a fleet action. Only once had the French put to sea, and then he had missed them ; but since they returned to port shortly after, no harm was done. Part of the fleet did indeed come out a few weeks before the arrival of the *Centaur*. A few ships of the line had ventured out to escort a convoy to Spain. This time the vigilance of the British fleet was rewarded. The convoy was intercepted, the ships of the line driven ashore in flames, and the transports sunk.

This minor disaster stifled whatever initiative there was in the higher command at Toulon. For the next eighteen months little was seen of the French except their topmasts as they rode at anchor in the outer harbour. Sometimes, writes Marryat, "the French used to come out and manoeuvre within range of their batteries ; or, if they proceeded further from shore, they took good care that they had a leading wind to return again into port." But the British could see that the Toulon fleet had grown to a formidable size ; in February Collingwood reports 17 of the line and 11 frigates. He could afford to take no chances. Even if his squadron was not itself in sight of the cliffs of Cape Sicié, a few frigates were left to cruise up and down outside the harbour.

The Navy has never performed a task which demanded so much patience, fortitude, and vigilance, with so little hope of glory. Collingwood had served his term under Cornwallis outside Brest in the years preceding Trafalgar ; since 1805 he had spent five equally unpleasant years outside Toulon. Ill health compelled him to spend most of the winter of 1809

either at Malta or Minorca, the duties of blockade being delegated to vice-admirals like Martin or Keats or Hood. Even then he scarcely ever left his desk in his cabin in the *Ville de Paris*, where he dared not even light a fire for fear of setting a bad example. For five years he had watched Napoleon's star rising over Europe. The capture of a few Ionian Islands, the slow progress of the war in Spain (even now the French threatened Cadiz from the land)—none of these pin-pricks appeared to a contemporary to check that imperial progress. By the time Marryat arrived the Admiral was literally harassed to the point of death by overwork and constant pain. He describes himself as hollow cheeked, old, worn out ; his stomach complaint "has been daily increasing, so that I am now almost past walking across my cabin ; and as it is attributed to my long service in a ship, I have little hope of amendment until I can land."

At length, in March 1810, the relief he had so earnestly demanded for years past was granted. He surrendered the command to Martin and the *Ville de Paris* sailed for England. On March 7th, before even reaching Gibraltar, England's most patient public servant died, as he had lived, at sea. His epitaph is a phrase from one of his own letters : "the patient courage which waits for the opportunity it cannot create."

In the years which succeeded his death the Mediterranean fleet acquired a bad reputation. In May Sir Charles Cotton, an admiral no one had ever heard of, arrived to take over the command. Fortunately, in 1811, he was replaced by Lord Exmouth. Marryat's service with this fleet lasted from the autumn of 1809 till the autumn of 1810. For most of that period his

ship was the flagship of the blockading squadron. Week after week the *Centaur* cruised off Cape Sicié. With the morning gun she stood in towards the shore ; with the evening gun she stood out to sea. " Nothing," complains Marryat, " can be more dull and monotonous than a blockading cruise ' in the team ' as we call it. The frigates have, in this respect, every advantage ; they are always employed on shore, often in action, and the more men they have killed," he adds cheerfully because of the chance of promotion, " the happier are the survivors." How he must have longed to have been with Brenton in the *Spartan*, still keeping the Cochrane tradition alive in this part of the world !

Boredom spread like dry rot through the fleet. Collingwood, who had always recognised the danger of its consequences, had encouraged ship's bands (from all accounts his fleet was the most musical that ever put to sea), and above all, amateur theatricals. These performances reached such a high standard that one guest, a Moorish potentate, was so intrigued with one of the leading ' ladies ' that he invaded the dressing rooms, and refused to be convinced " that they are not put in some snug place until the next play night." As soon as old Cuddy's influence was removed, boredom bred inefficiency. The commanders in chief experienced more trouble with their own fleet than with the enemy's. They complained of a notable lack of zeal and a corresponding increase in quarrelsome behaviour. By 1811 the fleet was in a state of bordering on open mutiny against Cotton, whose appointment, it was felt, was entirely due to political influence. Sir Charles Napier, who spent three years on that station, complains that

the fleet "to look at, was the finest I ever saw, but in performing evolutions the most lubberly. . . . I don't believe that there was a quarter of the line of battle ships in that fleet that had been exercised at firing powder and shot ; and as for firing with precision they knew nothing of it. . . . It is beyond a doubt that, at the conclusion of the war, more than a half of our ships of the line were in such bad order, and so infamously manned, as to render them unequal to contend with a disciplined enemy ; they would have beat a French or a Spanish ship, who were worse than themselves ; but I will stake my existence, had an American line of battle ship fallen in with one half of them they would have been taken."

The majority of senior officers were tired of stalemate. If they did not become lazy, they became martinets. A passion for spit and polish developed. One of Marryat's characters, a poor wretch condemned to be hanged for mutiny, explains why flogging became so frequent in the fleet. "When you are a captain," he says to a midshipman who is clearly Marryat himself, "as I am very sure you will be, do not worry your men into mutiny by making what is called a smart ship. Cleanliness and good order are what seamen like ; but niggling, polishing, scraping iron bars and ring bolts, and the like of that, a sailor dislikes more than a flogging at the gangway. If, in reefing topsails, you happen to be a minute later than another ship, never mind it, so long as your sails are well reefed, and fit to stand blowing weather. Many a sail is split by bad reefing, and many a good sailor has lost his life by that foolish hurry which has done incredible harm in the navy."

When there was no fighting to be done, captains

turned their attention to unessentials. Races were run to man the rigging ; foolish records were set up for the fastest time to reef topsails ; guns were polished till they shone again. This sort of routine gave endless opportunities for punishment. It was bad enough for a pressed man to serve three years without putting foot on shore ; but it was hell when every venial error was punished with two or three dozen lashes. During the last few years of the war Marryat, inured though he was to a tough life, saw sights which he never forgot. No one can accuse his boisterous spirit of being unduly sensitive, but he never describes a flogging without making the reader feel what a brutal, humiliating punishment it was.

In the first chapter of *The King's Own* he describes the most horrible punishment of the Old Navy—a flogging round the fleet.* The offender was rowed from ship to ship to the tune of the Rogue's March. Alongside each ship he received a dozen lashes, the ship's company being drawn up on deck to witness the punishment. It was by no means a rare practice in 1810. In that very year two cases are recorded, one at Spithead and one in the fleet at Lisbon ; there were probably more. Marryat's scene is laid during the great Mutinies of 1797, of which he wrote : " it must be acknowledged that the seamen, on the occasion of the first mutiny (at Spithead), had just grounds of complaint." " The extent to which cruelty was carried on under the name of discipline on board many ships is not generally known," says Jack Nasty Face at a later date ; " nor will a British public believe that any

* Keel hauling, when a man was lowered down one side of the ship and hauled up, half drowned, on the other, is described in *Snarleyyow*. It had long gone out of fashion.

body of men would submit to such marks of degradation as they were compelled to undergo."

There were plenty of officers who had forgotten the lessons of the Mutinies by 1810 ; many who, as Collingwood complained, "beat the men into a state of insubordination." Marryat tells of one monster (we shall meet him in the West Indies) who ordered six dozen lashes for spitting on the quarter deck. The offence may sound sacrilegious to a modern officer ; but in days when every seaman chewed tobacco, spitting was a universal practice. Marryat's comment on the episode shows the principles which guided his own conduct when he reached a position of authority : "even at this distance of time, I am shocked at it, and bitterly lament the painful necessity I have often been under of inflicting similar punishment." The Articles of War, which remained almost unchanged from 1749 till 1860, justified these punishments. They were, it will be remembered, the favourite reading of Jack Easy in times of trouble, because they allowed such extensive powers to a commanding officer. Few more brutal codes can ever have been drawn up. The death penalty was permitted for no less than ten offences, and every venial breach of discipline could be punished with extreme severity.

One of Marryat's first duties on reaching the Mediterranean was to help quell a mutiny on board the *Centaur*.* He describes a typical court-martial, all the more

* That the account of the Mediterranean fleet given by Marryat is not exaggerated is proved by the Captain's log. 'Dec. 11th, 1809.—Mustered the people at divisions in blue jacket and white trousers. Read the Articles of War. Sent a boat with a Lieutenant manned and armed to attend punishments of two sailors hung on the fore yard arms on board the *Warrior* at 10.0 for the unnatural crime." June 19th, two men hung for desertion ; a few weeks later sentences of 200 lashes passed on two men in the *Centaur*. Hood, moreover, was accounted a particularly humane officer.

pompous because officers had nothing else to do. "If the weather be fine, the ship is arranged with the greatest nicety; her decks are white as snow—her hammocks are stowed with care—her ropes are taut—her yards square—her guns run out—and a guard of marines prepared to receive every member of the court with the honour due to his rank." The officers assemble in the Admiral's cabin round a green baize table, on which are placed pens, paper, and a copy of the Articles of War. The master-at-arms, with sword drawn, brings in the prisoner. The day after the trial, ceremonious punishment—hanging at the yard arm, perhaps—is carried out. A drawing by Cruikshank shows us the scene of a flogging at the gangway, a punishment which any captain could give at his own discretion. A squad of marines stands at attention on the poop; the officers, with two midshipmen in the foreground, are there as witnesses; the unfortunate wretch is seized up at the gratings; the hairy bo'sun in the background bares his arms and makes the 3-foot thongs of the cat whistle through the air before he lays it on to the bare, crucified body before him. Between each stroke (forty-eight or sixty were common) he draws his fingers through the thongs to prevent blood congealing them, thereby lessening the agony of the stripes.

The details of this engraving were probably provided by Marryat, who had recently collaborated with Cruikshank in a number of cartoons. It appeared in *Greenwich Hospital; a series of naval sketches descriptive of the Life of a Man-o'-War's man, by an old sailor*—i.e., Captain Barker, Marryat's admirer and friend. In the original edition of 1826 the engraving is finely tinted.

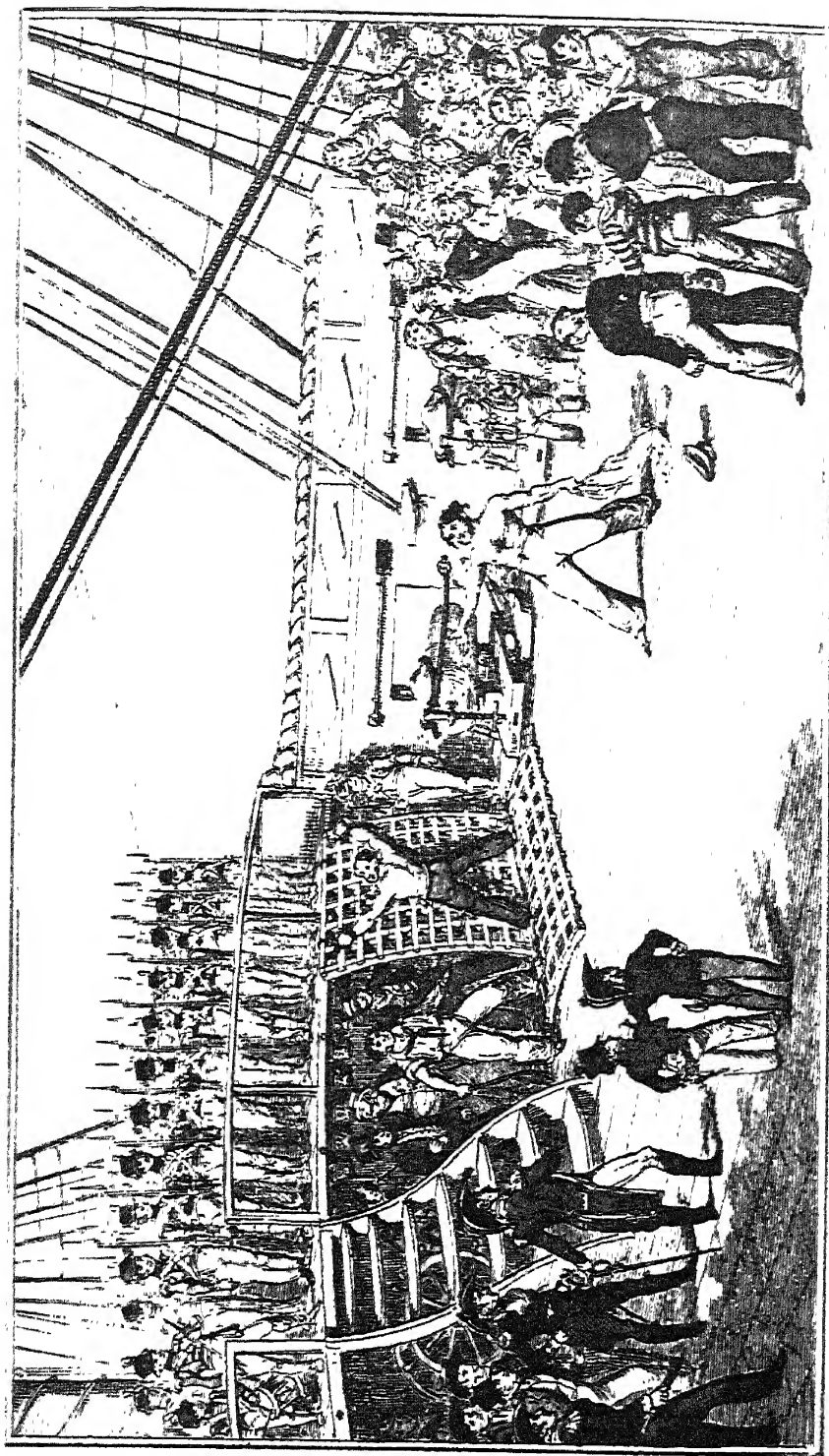
It illustrates a yarn called *The Point of Honour* : “the poor fellow was seized up—hats off—the article for disobedience of orders read—and ‘Boatswain’s mate, give him two dozen’ was heard. The tails of the cat were cleaned, the arm was lifted up, and the blow just falling, when a man rush’d from amongst us, and called out ‘Avast ! It was I that sung out at the Capstan !’ and in an instant his shirt was over his head.”

After the war a group of Radicals, headed by Joseph Hume, agitated for the abolition of this barbarous practice ; and in 1828 a series of articles to *The Times* drew the attention of the public to the question. To most naval officers these efforts appeared to be nothing more than humanitarian, march-o’-mind nonsense. They knew that the root of the mischief lay in the system of impressment, the abolition of which Marryat recommended in 1822. As long as the scourings of the gaols were forced to serve in his Majesty’s ships, discipline would be imperilled if flogging was abolished. Marryat puts the point justly, if unsympathetically, in a poem called *The Cat*.

What can they know, these Commons green,
Of men-of-war’s conditions ?
And what the devil do they mean
By bringing up petitions ?

I must allow a naked back
Was ever my aversion ;
But chaps we have on board who lack
What Boatswain calls *coershun*.

If sculkers are to go scot free,
And good men double tides work,
A ship like that won’t do for me,
Or those who never toil shirk.



THE POINT OF HONOUR

Engraving by Cruikshank

THE MEDITERRANEAN FLEET

When slinking Bob my locket prigg'd
Which cased the hair of Nancy,
D've think to see the grating rigged
Was not unto my fancy?

We know that sometimes it will hap
A good man gets in trouble ;
A drop too much will make him nap,
Or sometimes to see double.

But when called up, you touch your hat,
And plead, ' The first offence, sir,'
The skipper, he detests the cat ;
His anger was pretence, sir.

The lash, when given, is deserved,
And certain 'tis, our navy,
If discipline were not preserved,
Would soon go to old Davy.

I don't know what they would be at—
They'd screen all thieves and sculks, sir,
A seaman true don't fear the cat
Will ever scratch his hulk, sir.

Such an attitude made Radicals critical of Marryat's work. He was accused of seeking to amuse his readers rather than reform the Service. That is perfectly true of his best novels ; but it is not true of a book like *Frank Mildmay*. Marryat claimed with justice that his early books resulted in the adoption of many minor reforms. Perhaps his keenest critic is C. R. Pemberton, a seaman with a grievance, gifted with a superb style. He had been a victim of the Press Gang, and many years after the war he wrote his memoirs to tell " the tale of thousands who have had no historian." After confessing his admiration for the way Marryat abandons " the clap-trap trumpery about the ' generous and honest English tars,' " he denies that any serious attempt is made " to give these things with the sternness of truth."

Critics from another class have said that a book like *Mildmay* exaggerates the worst side of the navy. That is nonsense, because the book is definitely autobiographical. Indeed, the more carefully Marryat's early work is studied the more convinced we are of the accuracy with which naval manners are described. But as far as his later work goes, we may agree with Pemberton's remark about him and about fellow writers like Glascock and Chamier : "it is not unlikely, nor is it ungenerous to say so, that an interfering 'esprit de corps' allured them away from the statements which might have enabled the readers, and through them society at large, to arrive at a just conclusion on these matters." Indeed he is forced to admit that if Marryat had been more of a realist, his work "would be deemed unpatriotic, disloyal, un-English, or the astringency of a discontented spirit."

It was not till 1811 that captains had to make a quarterly return of punishments inflicted. And, in spite of the abolition of impressment, it was not till 1866 that an Act of Parliament limited the number of lashes for a single offence to forty-eight. Flogging in the fleet was formally abolished in 1879.

Apart from a succession of courts martial, the only relief for blockading vessels was a refit at Malta. Even when in port there was seldom time for careening, so that ships like the *Britannia* and the *Dreadnought*, which had been long at sea, were so foul that they would have been useless in any emergency.

After Cape Sicié—"there is no place in Europe like it for gales of wind"—it was with unalloyed delight that midshipmen like Marryat went on shore at Malta. A dirty plague-stricken place it might be, an island

inhabited by goats, priests and beggars, but it was heaven after weary weeks at sea. Running up the Nix Mangiare steps to the Strada Reale, youngsters were accosted by the whines of a hundred beggars—"Oh Signore! mi povero miserabile, nix padre, nix madre, nix mangiare for sixteen days, per Jesu Cristo Amen!" On the downs beyond Valetta there were mules to be hired to ride to Civita Vecchia, the chief pleasure resort of the island. Cudgel in hand, with shouts of "Make sail, lads!" a cavalcade would set off at full gallop in line abreast. But the mules were well trained. Three miles out they would 'pitch their riders over the bows' and return home at a comfortable trot.

Midshipman Easy's adventures at Malta have immortalised the place for the landsman. "He recognised the place," writes Henry Kingsley in *Ravenshoe*, "as one long known and very dear to him. On these very stairs Mr. Midshipman Easy stood, and resolved that he would take a boat and sail to Gazo. Other events have taken place at Malta, but Charles did not think of them. . . . He thought of Midshipman Easy, and felt as if he had seen the place before." As a matter of fact, there is some basis for Easy's escapades on shore. We need not suppose that Marryat himself fell in love with the Governor's daughter; but he was eighteen years old, and as Nelson said, "every man becomes a bachelor after he passes the Rock of Gibraltar." A letter from Lord Exmouth shows that Easy's affairs are not pure romance—"what appears the more destructive to the Public Service are the pleasures and amusements held out to young men by the apparent Hospitable Disposition of families resident here."

There was at least one occasion during an otherwise tedious year of service on which Marryat distinguished himself. In September, when the *Centaur* was cruising off Toulon, a seaman named Thomas Mowbray fell overboard from the main yard. Marryat dived overboard and saved his life. To jump from the high deck of a ship of the line was an even more heroic action than it would be to-day. Lifebuoys were of the most primitive type ; a wooden grating was usually thrown over the side with a life line attached. The rescuer might be left a mile or more behind before the ship hove to and lowered a boat.

A few weeks later, in October, 1810, he was transferred to the *Atlas* (74, Captain James Sanders) to return to Cadiz. Thence he was ordered home as a supernumerary in the *Namur* (74, Captain Alex Shippard), which reached England in January, 1811.

CHAPTER IX

THE AMERICAN WAR. I

It oft-time has been told
That the British seamen bold
Could flog the tars of France
So neat and handy, O !
But they never met their match
Till the Yankees did them catch—
Oh ! the Yankee boy for fighting
Is the dandy, O !

American Sea Song.

AT the end of January, 1811, Marryat was appointed to a frigate on the North American station. He went out to Bermuda as a supernumerary in the *Africa* (64, Captain James Bastard). She was an old ship, built in 1781, but still regarded as good enough to become the flagship of Rear-Admiral Sawyer in the West Indies. It was not a pleasant voyage. The midshipmen's mess was crowded with thirty youngsters going out to join their ships ; the first lieutenant was a drunkard, and the food inedible. But Marryat had at least the satisfaction of being made mate of the watch over the heads of many who were his seniors.

Probably this was because one day, when the ship was driving at seven knots before the trades, a seaman named James Walker fell overboard. Marryat dived to rescue him, but was unable to save his life. By the time he himself was picked up he was nearly two miles astern of the ship.

When Nelson was young the West Indies station was known as the Station of Honour. So it was in the eighteenth century; but in 1811 it was a dull and unpopular part of the world. All the French islands had long since fallen into the hands of the British. There was no prospect of fighting, and therefore little opportunity for promotion. As the result of boredom, ships either became smart yachts or hells afloat, commanded by brutal captains who tyrannised with impunity, far from the eye of officialdom. One who knew the station well writes: "A succession of insipid cruises necessarily begat, among both officers and men, habits of inattention. The situation of a gunner on board our ships became almost a sinecure. Instead of the sturdy occupation of handling the ship's guns, now seldom used but on salutes, the men were taught to polish the screws and copper on the bits, etc., by way of ornament to the quarter deck. Such of the crews as escaped this menial office were set to reeving and unreeving the topsails against time, preparatory to a match with any other of His Majesty's ships that might happen to fall in company." In fact, a situation altogether reminiscent of the Mediterranean fleet. The captains were not entirely to blame for this: it was partly due to the false economy practised by the Navy Board. Shooting at marks was discouraged because it was considered waste of powder and shot. There is evidence, however, that matters were better in the Halifax squadron, which Marryat was soon to join.

The worst thing about the West Indies was a reputation for ill health. In spite of the reforms of Rodney's fleet surgeon, Gilbert Blane, Yellow Fever—Black Vomit,

or Yellow Jack, to the lower deck—continued to scourge squadrons in those waters. A grim description of such an epidemic in *The King's Own* shows how sailors dreaded the plague and how futile were the measures taken to combat it. "It's devil incarnate, that's sartain," says old Swinburne in *Peter Simple*; "you're well and able to take your allowance in the morning, and dead as a herring 'fore night."

Such things did not weigh heavily on a midshipman who was seeing the islands for the first time. Romance was in the air he breathed. Buccaneers had not yet become legendary monsters who chewed glass and stuck lighted matches in their beards. Slavers and pirates still swarmed in the hidden harbours of the Caribbean Sea.

From his first landfall Marryat loved those harbours, which he has immortalised in many an exciting scene. As the *Africa* anchored in one of the inlets after the longest sea voyage he had yet experienced, and the bumboats sculled alongside laden with bananas, oranges, mangoes and fried flying-fish, he felt as if he had sailed into the port of heaven. "I never can forget the sensation of admiration which I felt on closing with Needham Point to enter Carlisle Bay. The beach of such a pure dazzling white, backed by the tall, green coco-nut trees, waving their spreading heads to the fresh breeze, the dark blue of the sky, and the deeper blue of the transparent ocean, occasionally varied into green as we passed by the coral rocks which threw their branches out from the bottom—the town opening to our view by degrees, houses after houses, so neat with their green jalousies, dotting the landscape, the fort with the colours flying, troops of officers riding

down, a busy population of all colours, relieved by the whiteness of their dress. Altogether the scene realised my first ideas of Fairyland—"And can this be such a dreadful place as it is described?" thought I."

The fairy beauty reflected in these placid lagoons lent colour to the belief that they were floating islands, anchored by reefs of coral. That was what Andrew Marvell had in mind in lines Marryat loved to quote :

"Where the remote Bermudas ride
In th' ocean's bosom unespied."

He tells of one sailor, arrested on shore for drunkenness, who stamped the floor of the guardhouse in his rage, roaring, "Let me out, or damn your eyes, I'll knock a hole in your bottom, scuttle your island, and send you all to hell together."

At the end of April, 1811, he sailed north to Halifax in one of the smallest vessels in the Navy List—the *Chubb* (schooner), 4 guns. She was an ugly little craft commanded by a certain Lieutenant Nisbet. He and his officers were so constantly drunk that it was by the merest good fortune they made the Sambro' Lighthouse at the entrance to Halifax harbour; even then they ran aground on Cornwallis Island. We are not surprised to learn that a year later the *Chubb* foundered with all hands.

Marryat's new frigate was the *Aeolus*, launched in 1801, of 38 guns and 260 men. After service at Trafalgar she was commanded by a captain of whom Marryat speaks in the highest terms. Lord James Townshend was so broad in the beam, so rolling in his gait, that he looked more like a 'tarpaulin' than a patrician. He had been on the station five years and he was every inch a

sailor—"knew a ship from stem to stern, understood the character of seamen, and gained their confidence. He could hand, reef, and steer, knot and splice ; but he was no orator ; he read little and spoke less. He was good tempered, honest and unsophisticated, with a large proportion of common sense. He was good humoured and free with his officers ; though, if offended, he was violent, but soon calm again ; nor could you ever perceive any assumption of consequence from his title of nobility." In the course of a cruise to Quebec and back Townshend came to have an equally high opinion of Marryat's capabilities. He found in him an excellent seaman and an officer of outstanding physical courage.

His behaviour during a gale which blew up on September 30th, when they were cruising off the coast of New England, is the best proof of what a first rate officer Marryat was at the age of nineteen. There was a heavy swell that morning. Towards noon the sky darkened, and distracted gulls flew screaming overhead. Soon the breeze freshened to gale force. Before they had trimmed the sails, a gust of hurricane violence struck the ship and laid her on her beam ends. Topmast and mizenmast went by the board. Shot burst from the lockers, guns hurtled across the deck like living creatures, sea chests, pigs, sheep, poultry floated away as the ship heeled over and took it green. In this creaming chaos of wind and waves no one could hear the orders shouted through the speaking trumpet. The ship reeled, and for half an hour officers and men seemed paralysed as they hung on to ring bolts and stancheons. Only one thing could save the ship—cut away the thundering canvas of the split sails, which

weighed the ship down from the fore and main masts. The captain dared not give the order, for to climb aloft in that gale seemed certain death.

Seizing a hatchet, Marryat ran forward to volunteer. As soon as he gave a lead in mounting the rigging, a handful of hardy seamen followed him up the futtock shrouds. "We were forced to embrace the shrouds with arms and legs ; and with breathless apprehension for our lives did the captain, officers and crew gaze on us as we mounted, and cheered us at every stroke of the tomahawk. The danger seemed past when we reached the catharpens, where we had foot room. We divided our work, some took the lanyards of the topmast rigging, I the slings of the mainyard. The lusty blows we dealt were answered by corresponding crashes ; and at length down fell the tremendous wreck over the larboard gunwale. The ship felt instant relief ; she righted, and we descended amidst the cheers, the applauses, the congratulations, and, I may add, the tears of gratitude, of most of our shipmates."

For this action Townshend awarded him a certificate, adding that Marryat had "conducted himself with bravery, intrepidity and firmness as merited my warmest admiration." A few weeks later he won a second certificate from his captain, when he saved a boy from drowning in Halifax harbour.

"All sailors agree in asserting that Halifax is one of the most delightful ports in which a ship can anchor." His mother was an American Loyalist, so we may be sure that he was well entertained. But the round of dances and flirtations was soon interrupted by an incident which was a portent of trouble. One day early in June, 1811, the *Little Belt* sloop staggered into

harbour with her rigging shot to pieces. Captain Bingham rowed over to the *Aeolus* to report to his senior officer. He told Townshend that on May 16th he had sighted a strange sail off Cape Henry. He hailed to enquire her business, but received no answer. When the ship was fifty yards on his weather beam he shouted "What ship is that?" The reply was a repetition of his own question. Then, suddenly, a gun went off. A furious engagement began. Before long the sloop's rigging was so badly damaged that she fell off the wind and could not bring a gun to bear. Seeing this, her opponent also ceased fire, and explanations ensued.

The stranger proved to be the U.S. frigate *President*, Commodore Rodgers. He had been ordered to stop and search the British frigate *Guerrière*, which had illegally pressed an American seaman. The *Little Belt* did not look in the least like the *Guerrière*, but Rodgers was spoiling for a fight. Who fired the first shot in that overture to the war with the United States no one has ever determined. Admiral Sawyer was informed of the occurrence, which was no surprise to him. He had been expecting trouble. So much so that on April 19th he had issued a fleet order: "You are to be particularly careful to give no just cause of offence to the government of the United States, and to caution the officers who may be sent on board their vessels accordingly. You are not to anchor in any of their ports, but in cases of absolute necessity."

The American grievances were of long standing. Indeed the war, when it did come a year later, was really an epilogue to the War of Independence. Commercially, the Americans were still far from free. The exigencies of the European blockade demanded

a strict, if illegal, control over American shipping. As their mercantile marine was second only in importance to our own, there was endless opportunity for interference. Their ships were searched for contraband ; the ports to which they must sail dictated to them ; their every movement was watched with the eye of a jealous rival. As the mutual blockade continued, American shipping found itself crushed between the upper and the nether millstone. Napoleon banned all ships which came from Britain ; Britain seized every vessel which had not touched at one of her ports.

Illegal impressment was an even more irritating grievance to those who sailed in American ships. As the war dragged on, more and more British seamen deserted to the freer and better paid existence in American ships. A British captain had the right to recapture deserters—and he seldom bothered to make certain whether the men he seized from an American merchantman were British subjects or not. “Two thirds of our seamen,” says a Boston skipper in one of Marryat’s books, “have run away from your navy.” The contemporary historian James adds that the petty officers in the American navy “consisted, almost wholly, of the first order of British seamen ; of whom also the bulk of the crews were composed.” A friend of Marryat who, under the signature of ‘Aeolus’ contributed splenetic letters on the subject to the *Naval Chronicle* of 1813, vigorously supports this statement. The justice of the American point of view can be estimated from the fact that between 1801 and 1811, 917 American vessels were captured as contraband, and 6,257 seamen impressed.

The American Navy, consisting of eight frigates and

eight sloops, was regarded as a negligible force by the British Authorities. Had not Sawyer got three ships of the line and fifteen frigates? When war broke out a squadron under Sir Borlase Warren was detached as a precautionary measure of reinforcement; it was impossible to spare more ships without weakening the European blockade. This confidence, bred of twenty years uninterrupted sovereignty of the seas, was entirely misplaced. The best American frigates were really small, well manned, fast sailing line-of-battle ships. On their predatory cruises they endangered the West Indian trade convoys, and they proved to be more than a match for the British frigates.

On November 17th, 1811, before war had been declared, Marryat was transferred to the *Spartan* frigate. She was an old acquaintance of his. Sir Jahleel Brenton, her late captain, had ended his distinguished career in the Mediterranean in August, 1810. She was now under the command of his brother, Edward Pelham Brenton, a good seaman and a man of literary tastes. He was, says Marryat, "a scholar and a gentleman. Kind and friendly with his officers, his library was at their disposal; the fore cabin, where his books were kept, was open to all; it was the schoolroom of the young midshipmen and the study of the old ones. He was an excellent draughtsman, and I profited not a little by his instruction; he loved the society of ladies, and so did I." After the war Brenton indulged his taste by writing a naval history and a life of Lord St. Vincent. It is probable that he exercised a very important influence over Marryat's development. His was the first library Marryat ever browsed in, for there were no ships' libraries in those days. And he is the only man whose

help Marryat acknowledges when he was learning to sketch.

But the time for reading and drawing was over. In June, 1812, when the *Spartan* was at Quebec with pay for the garrison, they heard that war had been declared. She promptly sailed down the St. Lawrence to rejoin Sawyer's squadron, which consisted of the *Africa* (64), *Shannon*, *Spartan*, *Aeolus*, *Guerrière*, *Belvidere* and *Tartarus* frigates, and five sloops of war. The Boston squadron, under Rodgers, consisted of two 54-gun frigates, two 36-gun frigates, and two large sloops. Unfortunately the British squadron had already sailed south when the *Spartan* arrived in July. On this account she missed one of the most brilliant examples of seamanship ever recorded—when the American frigate *Constitution* eluded pursuit by kedging.

Sir Borlase Warren, who directed operations, had received contradictory orders from home. On the one hand he was instructed "to attack, take or sink, burn or destroy, all ships or vessels belonging to the United States or the citizens thereof." On the other, such was the anxiety of the government to bring this unfortunate quarrel to a speedy close, he was told "to direct the commanders of His Majesty's ships to exercise all possible forbearance towards the United States." Warren, who was an amiable diplomatist rather than an admiral of the blue water school, preferred the latter reading.

The *Spartan* was guided by the opposite spirit. Marryat gleefully records that they were able to capture a few merchant vessels before their captains even knew that war had been declared. South of Newfoundland the ocean swarmed with amateur privateers, hoping to

pick up a rich West Indiaman homeward bound. They were lightly armed schooners, carrying a crew of forty men, a few muskets and one swivel gun, called a Long Tom, everything being sacrificed to speed. As Michael Scott says in his account of the war in that overpraised book, *Tom Cringle's Log*, no mercy was ever shown to a privateer. If she was not deliberately sunk at sight, she was taken back to join the host of prizes laid up in Halifax harbour.

Lord St. Vincent complained in a letter about this date: "I hear the exercise of the great guns is laid aside, and is succeeded by a foolish frippery and useless ornament." The *Spartan* was not a ship of that stamp. Her captain indignantly comments that, though such may have been the case elsewhere, "certainly on the coast of North America it was not so, the ships on that station being kept constantly in exercise under the daily expectation of a war." If other ships had been like Broke's *Shannon*—whose captain gave a pound of tobacco to every man who hit the bull's eye in gunnery practice—there would have been fewer disastrous frigate actions to record. But that they were not is proved, among other things, by the fact that even the *Aeolus* failed to bring the *Constitution* to action, an American officer expressing his surprise that "for some unexplained cause he (Lord Townshend) suffered us to pass quietly."

The *Spartan* was chiefly engaged in attacks on the New England coast, in the course of which she captured a score of small vessels. The closely printed pages of the official prize lists bear witness to the havoc she wrought on American shipping: July 16th—*Active* schooner; July 19th, off Annapolis, *Actress* sloop; August 1st—*Morning Star* and *Polly* schooners, burnt

in the Bay of Fundy. Marryat, an old hand at cutting-out expeditions, was in command of the ship's boats when the last named vessels were burnt in Haycock's Harbour. Two days later he was again in command when they cut out a powerful 6-gun revenue cutter and three other vessels in the Little River.

In spite of these captures and a hundred others, which totally disorganised the coast trade, the British public was convinced by the end of this year that this was an altogether disastrous war. The foolish optimism of a few months back had been shaken by a few spectacular but comparatively unimportant frigate actions, in which British ships were defeated at the hands of immensely superior 'frigates.' Confidence in the navy, complete because so long unchallenged, was badly shaken. As Canning said in the House, "It cannot be too deeply felt that the sacred spell of the invincibility of the British Navy has been broken by these unfortunate victories."

But with their record of prizes, neither Marryat nor any other officer in the *Spartan* could be accused of being backward in their duty.

CHAPTER X

THE AMERICAN WAR. II

It is a fine Frigate, dare not mention her name,
And in the West Indies she bore great fame,
For cruel hard usage in every degree,
Like slaves in a galley, we plough the salt sea.

Song : *The Fancy Frigate.*

IT seems almost incredible that a junior officer, on a station dangerously under strength, should have to return home to 'pass for lieutenant' in the middle of a war. Yet such was the case with Frederick Marryat. In the autumn of 1812 he was permitted to take a passage home in the *Indian* sloop, which reached Portsmouth on October 6th.

Samual Pepys had been chiefly responsible for the institution of this examination, which was part of his lifelong battle against influence and inefficiency. It was no mere formality, although there are cases in which a young man of influence was commissioned lieutenant without an adequate record of service. Marryat's daughter claims that her father was commissioned "without the necessity of his going abroad (whatever that may mean), 'a mark of favour which' (as Mr. Hay, secretary to the Admiralty, says in a letter to Mr. Joseph Marryat), 'is only exhibited where the *particular services* of the candidate appear to deserve it.' " Nevertheless the Admiralty records prove that

Marryat was examined in the usual way on board the *Gladiator* in Portsmouth Harbour.

The examination, which was held on October 7th, was a searching business. A score of midshipmen, feverishly turning the pages of Hamilton Moore's *Complete Navigator*, assembled on the deck of the *Gladiator*. One after another they were summoned to the captain's cabin with their private logs and certificates under their arms ; one after another they reappeared crestfallen with failure. The impudent Mildmay, Marryat's first hero, ' passes out ' with dramatic success. He steps boldly up to the green baize table at which the three examining captains are sitting ; solves with ease the problems in higher mathematics which are fired at him ; nonchalantly puts a model ship through a series of intricate evolutions ; trips up the pumpkin-faced senior captain on a point of navigation ; and is complimented with some tartness on his knowledge of practical seamanship as his lieutenant's certificate is handed to him. Young Mr. Simple, on the other hand, bursts into tears when the senior captain begins to hector him, and is only saved at the last moment by one of the other examiners happening to notice that he has won a certificate for life saving.

Marryat himself produced his logs, his certificates of service, and particularly the four life saving certificates he had already won. Probably even at that date he had as low an opinion of the qualifications of his seniors to examine in navigation as he had later. As a result of the ancient practice of leaving the navigation of a ship to the Master, senior captains, he asserts, had long forgotten all they ever knew about that science : " nineteen out of twenty would be turned back when they were

questioned in navigation.” However that may be, his examiners were sufficiently impressed with his record and his technical knowledge to pass him with flying colours.

In pursuance of the Directions of Admiral Sir Richard Bickerton, Bart., Commander-in-Chief . . . we have examined Mr. Frederick Marryat, Master’s Mate, who by certificate appears to be more than Nineteen Years of Age, and find that he has gone to sea more than Six Years in the ships and qualities undermentioned. (List of ships follows). He produceth Journals kept by himself in the *Impérieuse*, *Centaur*, *Namur*, *Aeolus*, *Spartan* and Certificates from Captains Lord Cochrane, Garth, Webley, Richards, Townshend, Brenton and Jones of his Diligence and Sobriety ; he can splice, knot, reef, take in and set Sails, Moor and Unmoor, Work and Manage a Ship in the various Situations in which she may be placed ; calculate the Tides ; keep a reckoning of a ship’s way by Plane and Mercator’s Sailing ; observe the Latitude by the Sun and Stars, and also find the same by Double Altitudes of the Sun ; ascertain the variations of the Compass by Azimuths and Amplitudes ; and is well qualified to take a charge of a Watch on board any of His Majesty’s ships.

Given under our hands on board His Majesty’s ship *Gladiator* of Portsmouth this 7th October, 1812.

| | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| J. D. Springer | } Captains of H.M. Ships | { <i>Barham</i> |
| B. W. Page | | { <i>Puissant</i> |
| E. Berry | | { <i>Barfleur</i> |

(Endorsed) Fredk. Marryat.

None the less, on account of the correspondence referred to in the first chapter, he was not actually commissioned lieutenant until December 24th.

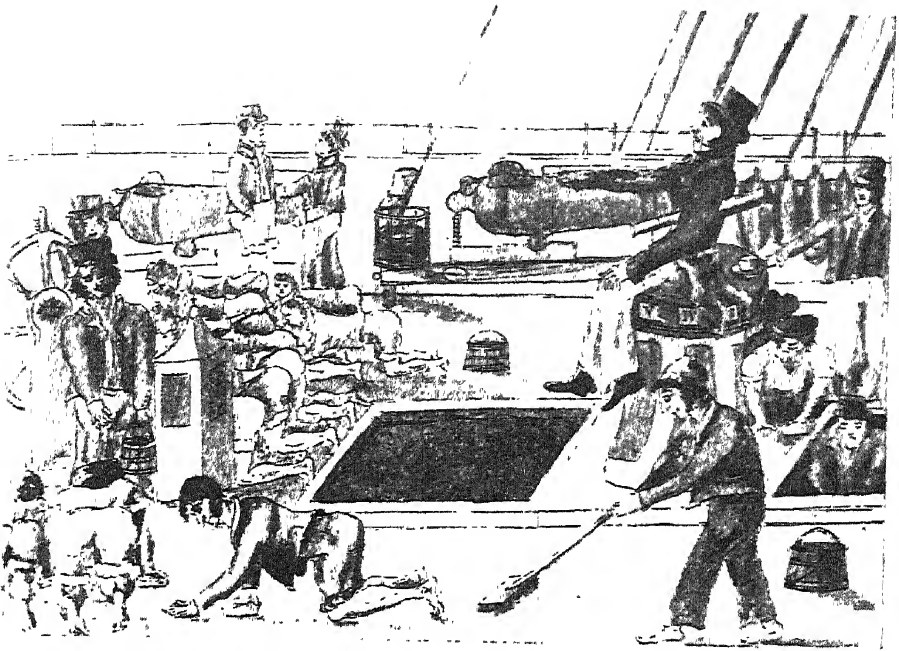
This promotion meant that his pay was increased from £30 per annum to £100, with a corresponding rise in receipts from prize money. Even then it was considerably less than that of the equivalent rank of Captain in the Army. The pride of putting on his new uniform made up for that. Lieutenants had hailed with delight an Order issued the previous August permitting them to wear one epaulet in full dress uniform,

the equivalent of the modern two stripes. Some verses in the *Naval Chronicle* of this year, signed M.M. (Midshipman Marryat?), celebrates the innovation in cheerful doggerel :

No more shall captain, vain and stern,
Nor flippant army subaltern
Alone the 'bullion' wear ;
No more marine subordinate
On deck display the epaulet
The while your shoulder's bare.
No longer at the splendid ball
Or party, or assembly, shall
The haughty fair one scorn you ;
For now, as well as soldiers fine
Or of militia, or the line,
Shall golden 'swab' adorn you.

A few days after his promotion Marryat had the pleasure of seeing his name in print for the first time. Only the appointments of lieutenants and senior officers were printed in the *London Gazette*. Lieutenant Frederick Marryat was appointed, in January, 1813, second lieutenant in the *Espiegle* sloop, of 387 tons and a crew of 121. She had only been launched the previous year ; "a most beautiful vessel," Marryat calls her ; "she mounted 18 guns and sat on the water like a duck." Yet this was to be the worst cruise on which he ever sailed.

His new captain was a certain John Taylor, who had only been appointed to the *Espiegle* on account of his insistent requests for a command and his influence with Lord Gambier. He was a fat, pursy fellow with shiftiness. The scene which greeted Marryat as he came up the side of the vessel in all the glory of his new uniform was symbolic of the whole cruise. Although the ship was still in port, a flogging was in progress. A gunner



THE MORNING WATCH

Sketch by Marryat



MR. BLOCKHEAD PROMOTED TO LIEUTENANT

was seized up at the gratings and the cat whistled through the air. "All this did not surprise me ; I was used to it ; but I was very much surprised to hear language in direct violation of the second article of war. 'Boat-swain's mate,' roared the captain, 'do your duty, or by God I will have you up and give you four dozen yourself. . . . Do your duty, sir, damn your soul !' " There was to be a good deal more of this 'most scandalous language.' Though it is only possible to print Taylor's more polite expression here, the reader need not be disappointed ; like an Australian private, he showed singularly little imagination in his choice of epithets.

That Marryat's picture of John Taylor, the 'Jacky' of *Frank Mildmay*, as a foul-mouthed sadist, a drunkard, a liar and a coward, is not in the least exaggerated is proved by the proceedings of the Court Martial held on his conduct exactly a year later. They show that Taylor was another Bligh, without the few redeeming qualities which distinguished the captain of the *Bounty*. It is to be hoped that Marryat is correct when he says that "the case was unique of its kind."

In 1814 Taylor was court-martialled on board the *Gladiator* pursuant to an order "that their Lordships had received complaints of the conduct of John Taylor, commander of H.M. Sloop *Espiegle*, setting forth that his treatment of the Ship's Company had been such as to keep them in a state bordering upon mutiny, refusing them when in Harbour the usual Indulgences of the Service and exercising towards them continual Acts of Severity and Cruelty, such as starting the sick and flogging persons in the sick list. That Captain Taylor had failed to do his Duty when in pursuit of the *Hornet* American

sloop after the Capture of His Majesty's sloop *Peacock*, and had made but two or three short tacks against the Current, and had never got to Windward of Demerara. That during the whole of his command he had neglected to exercise the Sloop's Company sufficiently at the Great Guns. That he had on several occasions exercised most unexampled tyranny and oppression towards the officers of the Sloop, particularly Mr. Dyer, the second lieutenant, and also the Carpenter, and that he had moreover made use of the most scandalous language to the former." It is probable that Marryat himself was one of those who lodged the complaints which brought on the trial.

To this formidable catalogue of offences Taylor made little defence. Now and again in the course of the evidence he raised an objection, but his objections were overruled. When, finally, he was himself called, he contented himself with a written defence, beautifully penned by some local lawyer, his own signature being a vulgar illiterate scrawl. He made no detailed reply to the charges brought against him, dismissing them as vague, malevolent fabrications, "trusting that the Zeal which I have at all times displayed on the prosecution of my Duty," and the "filthy and disgusting habits" of those he had punished, would sufficiently excuse him. That his punishments had been by no means tyrannical, he contended, was sufficiently proved by the fact that not a single death occurred during the cruise !

Judgment was then passed by the President of the Court, Rear-Admiral Foote, Admiral of the Blue. Having found him guilty on about half the counts, "the Court doth adjudge the said Captain John Taylor to be dismissed from His Majesty's service, but in consideration of the long and meritorious Conduct

of the said Captain doth strongly recommend him to the favourable Consideration of the Lords of the Admiralty." Actually, he was reinstated some years later.

The evidence gives a lurid picture of what happened on Marryat's first cruise as a lieutenant. The sad procession of witnesses, from the herculean bo'sun to the old carpenter who had been driven crazy from ill treatment, prove that the voyage out was an unending round of floggings, startings, foul language and petty tyranny. Taylor, of course, set great store by 'spit and polish'—the decks were as white as snow and the brasswork, as the boatswain said, "as bright as a silver spoon." In the course of his evidence Marryat says that the captain harassed the ship's company "by constantly keeping all hands on deck and holystoning more than once a day; we washed the deck sometimes twice a day."

By the time the ship joined Admiral Stirling's squadron at Barbados the crew was in a state bordering on mutiny. For fear of desertion, Taylor refused the customary shore leave; he even refused to allow the bumboats to come alongside with fresh fruit and vegetables. On the cruise south to Demerara matters got worse. Officers and men were sullen and mutinous. George Dougal, the first lieutenant, was the worst treated man in the ship. The Captain used the foulest language to him, even in the presence of the ship's company; he cursed him for letting the ship go to rack and ruin, accused him of gossiping instead of attending to duty, and was frequently heard to call him "an ignorant rascal." On one occasion Dougal stood up for himself. Taylor was so enraged that he imprisoned him in his cabin for two whole months, keeping a Marine sentry outside the door till the ship returned to port. His

treatment of the other officers was the same. In the course of an argument with Lieutenant Dyer about squaring the yards he called him an "ignorant son of a bitch, a stupid Whelp and a stinking Puppy." After enquiring how many sons of bitches his mother had produced before him, he confined Dyer to his cabin till the ship reached the Demerara river.

The worst case was that of Henry Powell, midshipman, aged eighteen, who was merely a passenger in the ship. He was "very wild and made use of blackguard language," said Taylor. One day when he was on the sick list, suffering from a severe cold, Taylor appointed him officer of the watch. After being on duty a few hours the boy felt unwell and went below. This was just the excuse Taylor wanted. Powell was summoned on deck and sentenced to two dozen lashes. When he tried to excuse himself on the grounds of ill health, Taylor struck him in the face. "Mr. Powell said he had never been treated so by a captain before. Captain Taylor said he was insolent, and turned the hands up and punished him on the back at the Gangway with 2 doz. lashes." The surgeon (Barry O'Meara, later Napoleon's surgeon) tried to stop the punishment, pointing out that it was illegal on two accounts : Powell was an officer and he was on the sick list. Taylor told him to mind his own business. As soon as the punishment was over, the lad was hurried below for treatment. That evening, Taylor came down into the mess. He told Powell to strip off his midshipman's uniform and go to join the seamen in the forecastle. The poor lad cried all night, says the surgeon, at the disgrace he had suffered ; for the rest of the voyage "he kept below for want of Clothing."

If such was his behaviour towards his officers his treatment of the ship's company can be imagined. Even in equatorial latitudes, the torture of holystoning was continued, with the sun beating down on back and neck, and the deck red hot to the knees. Four hours every morning was the rule ; once a week a spell from 4.0 a.m. till 11.30 a.m. ; or, if the captain was in a particularly evil mood, from 11.30 a.m. till four in the afternoon. No wonder the Boatswain says that he frequently heard the ship's company 'murmuring.'

On February 5th a seaman called Wallis was accused of smoking a pipe on the fore combings. He denied the charge, saying it was another sailor. Taylor lost his temper, told the man to take his jacket off, and ordered the two mates to start him. "I received 37 blows with the topsail clue line, 2½ inches, and 25 from the second mate."

"Was this starting severe?"

"Yes, it was."

He was then stripped to the waist, seized up and given six lashes with the cat. He would have received more had not the surgeon stepped forward in the dusk, held up a lantern to the man's lacerated back, and told the captain that the punishment must stop. The surgeon then "sent for Lieutenant Marryat to see me dressed. . . . I was in a very bad situation." For the next week he was detained in the sick bay with "my back and neck all bruised and cut from the beating and the flogging." Marryat says that the man's back was worse than if he had received 8 dozen lashes. Taylor's reply to this charge was as follows : "As to Wallis, who was punished for smoking, as stated by Lieutenant Marriott [*sic*] I must solemnly declare that I saw him

in the very Act." Even so, the Boatswain himself admits that the punishment was "extremely severe."

Of all the witnesses Marryat is at once the most restrained and the most ironic.

"Did you belong to His Majesty's ship *Espiegle*?"

"Yes."

"How long?"

"From the 28th of January, 1813, until the 15th of April of the same year."

"In what Capacity?"

"Second lieutenant."

"Do you know of any persons belonging to that sloop being started when sick?"

"I recollect one, Sturgess. He had been under the Doctor's hands a long while, with an ulcerated leg. He was started by Captain Taylor's order on the Quarter Deck by a boatswain's mate with a rope's end, a two-inch, I believe, not very severe. I do not know how many strokes he had; I think his Jacket was not off; I did not hear any reason given at the time for starting him; he hollowed out; I do not remember any other person being started in the sick list. A man, I think, by the name of Wallis, was started very severely by two Boatswain's mates with his Jacket off. I cannot recollect the size of the Rope, but it was larger than I had seen generally used on board other ships. . . ."

"Have you at any time heard Captain Taylor use scandalous language to any of the officers?"

"I heard him call the Master a stinking Son of a Bitch. He asked me what damned fool gave me my commission."

"Was Captain Taylor frequently in a state of drunkenness?"

“No.”

“Have you at any time seen him drunk?”

“Never drunk; there was always a visible difference in Captain Taylor’s conduct after dinner and before, but I never saw him drunk.” (Other witnesses, questioned on this point, stated: “he might look fresh, but he was always capable of doing his Duty,” “He was disguised a little in liquor sometimes.”)

“Was his conduct unlike an Officer and a Gentleman?”

“Generally it was unlike an Officer and a Gentleman.”

“In what ways was it unlike an Officer and a Gentleman?”

“In his language and manners, particularly. He was constantly swearing at his Officers; we were so used to it that I cannot particularise the instances; we had it so often. . . .”

“You have stated that the decks were frequently holystoned more than once a day. Was any reason given for so doing?”

“It was the Captain’s pleasure; there was no reason given. I always thought the decks clean enough.”

If Taylor’s aim had been to make the *Espiegle* a more efficient man-of-war, there might have been some excuse for his conduct. But one of the charges brought against him was neglect of gunnery practice. Questioned on this point, Marryat replied that he only remembered Taylor having exercised the crew “once at general quarters, and two or three times divisionally, I mean two or three guns.”

In February the *Espiegle* came to in the broad estuary

of the Essequibo river to refit before continuing her patrol of the South American coast. Two men had deserted at Surinam, so Taylor was chary of granting shore leave. The carpenter, however, had to be sent ashore for stores. He "came off very much in liquor ; he was ordered to his cabin ; he became deranged whilst under Confinement, for he was closely confined to his Cabin upwards of three weeks with a Sentry over him." "What effect had the confinement on your Health ?" he was asked at the Court Martial. "They told me I was out of my mind." He admitted that on the twenty-second day of his confinement (in a place within ten degrees of the equator) he got hold of a cutlass and threatened the sentry with it. For the rest of the voyage he was confined in a strait jacket.

For a few days the *Peacock* (18 guns, Captain Peake) lay alongside the *Espiegle* off Demarara (Georgetown). She was nicknamed 'the yacht' because she was one of the smartest ships in the navy. On Wednesday morning, February 24th, she weighed and stretched away to northward. That afternoon, a few hours after the *Peacock* had been seen hull down on the horizon, a strange sail was sighted off the mouth of the river. Taylor was on shore ; no boat was sent to tell him, because the town was over a mile away ; nor could the ship, with her rigging dismantled, go out to make enquiries. Before the officer of the watch (Marryat was on shore) could make up his mind what to do, he saw the stranger set her royals and tack away in the direction taken by the *Peacock*.

The stranger was the American sloop *Hornet* (20 guns, Captain Lawrence). Seeing that the dismantled ship lying in the river was British, Lawrence had determined

to catch her unawares. However, he states in his despatch that "in beating round the Caroband bank to get at her, I discovered another sail on my weather quarter, edging down for us. At 4.20 she hoisted English colours, at which time we discovered her to be a large man-of-war brig; beat to quarters and cleared ship for action, and kept close by the wind, if possible to get the weather gage." A smart action ensued. Half an hour later the *Peacock's* main mast went by the board. She struck, and a prize crew put out from the *Hornet*. They had only just taken possession of her when it was discovered that she was sinking under them. Her ensign was hoisted as a distress signal, but she sank in a few minutes.* The American crew managed to abandon her in time, but four British sailors made good their escape in the stern boat. The *Hornet* was not seriously damaged, but her "rigging and sails were much cut, and one shot through the foremast." Convinced that the *Espiegle* "could plainly see the whole of the action, and apprehensive that she would beat out to the assistance of her consort," Lawrence repaired the damage as quickly as possible, and by nightfall was on his way north.

As this action had only taken place six miles away, it might be thought that the sound of gun fire would have reached the ears of those on board the *Espiegle*. However this is stoutly denied by every one of the witnesses. Nevertheless an uneasy feeling prevailed on board that the stranger was an American. As Taylor continued to stay on shore nothing could be done further than setting up the rigging, so that the

* The *Peacock's* ensign is now in the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, where all the jacks captured in this war are preserved.

ship could put to sea at the first opportunity. The first the ship's company heard of the action was when Jacky came on board on Friday evening. Orders were given to weigh next morning, in pursuit. Why not immediately? The tide, said Taylor, was against him; but the Master's Mate did not consider that a valid excuse.

At 5.0 a.m. they started on a belated chase. A few miles out they passed one of the *Peacock's* masts sticking out of the water. Marryat tells how ardently the pursuit was maintained:

"Was you [*sic*] on board the *Espiegle* at the time she got under weigh and went in pursuit of the *Hornet*?"

"Yes, I was."

"Did Captain Taylor exert his utmost endeavours in pursuit of her?"

"When Captain Taylor came on board on the evening the intelligence was received, he said he was going immediately in quest of the *Hornet*. He did not get under weigh until the next morning. We expected he was going in quest of the *Hornet*. He made two or three short tacks, and after that kept on the Wind to the Northwards for Barbados. It was my watch and I mentioned tacking again. Captain Taylor replied that he was not going to tack again, as his orders were for Barbados. I mentioned I thought we had better go after the *Hornet*. He told me not to dictate to him, and I held my tongue of course."

A few days later Marryat very nearly lost his life on account of his captain's criminal laziness—if nothing worse. As it was he received an injury which troubled him all the rest of his life. A gale blew up, in the middle of which Taylor ordered the topmen to go aloft and

re-stow the booms. One of the sailors, Jacob Small, fell overboard from the fore rigging as the ship was struck by a gust. Marryat dived after him. Battling through the mountainous waves, he managed to reach the drowning man. But by that time, the ship was over a mile away. "Had the commonest diligence and seamanship been shown, I should have saved him. But the captain, it appeared, when he found I was overboard, was resolved to get rid of me, in order to save himself; he made use of every difficulty to prevent the boat coming to me." By the time the boat did at last reach the spot, Small was dead and Marryat himself on the point of drowning. In after days, says his daughter, "he would often speak of the sensation he experienced while drowning, and said that, the struggle for life once over, the waters closing round him assumed the appearance of waving green fields, which approached nearer and nearer and grew greener as his senses gradually forsook him. It was not a feeling of pain, but more like sinking down, overpressed by sleep, in the long soft grass of a cool meadow."

This attempt at a rescue resulted in a permanent injury to his health. In March he attended a ball at Barbadoes, perhaps a Dignity Ball like the one described in *Peter Simple*, at which he burst a blood vessel. In spite of his protests, the attentions of the regimental surgeon soon permitted him to resume duty on board ship. However, the surgeon concluded his report by saying that "Lieutenant Marryat's return to Barbados would be productive of the most dangerous, and ultimately fatal consequences to him." His recovery was only temporary. A few weeks later, when the ship put in to New Providence, a fall while climbing out of a

picket boat on to the wharf brought on a relapse. On April 17th much to his own relief and to Taylor's disgust, Marryat was discharged to sick quarters at Halifax.

The surgeon's report states—"We are of the opinion that this officer does not withdraw himself unnecessarily from the Service, nor does it appear that any misrepresentation has been made in his case"; which implies that Taylor had done his best to get Marryat retained in the *Espiegle*.

Soon after he was ordered home on sick leave in his old ship, the *Spartan*.*

On January 31st, 1814, after six months' convalescence at home, he was appointed to the *Newcastle*, Captain Lord George Stuart. Had not the navy been so short of officers he might have been invalided out of the Service. As it was, he had ample time to recover, because the ship did not sail till June. In the interval he attended Taylor's Court Martial at Portsmouth.

The *Newcastle* (1556 tons) and her sister ship *Leander* were new and curious ships, "run up in an unprecedentedly short space of time," says Marryat, in response to the public demand for ships which could meet the big American frigates on their own terms. The new class was specially designed as small line-of-battle ships by a French Royalist naval architect. Although officially classed as frigates, they had two flush gun decks in place of the single deck of the ordinary frigate; each ship was designed to carry 58 guns and a crew of 480 men. Because of the shortage of seasoned oak at the end of the war, they were built of pitch pine. This

* It may be as well to state here that before he was thirty Marryat received no less than 27 life saving certificates. In 1818 he was awarded a Gold Medal by the Royal Humane Society. In 1820 he submitted to the Society plans for a cork lined lifeboat with air-tight compartments. See *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1820.

occasioned a number of rude remarks in naval circles, where they were regarded as pretty, flimsy toys, and nicknamed 'the pasteboard fifties.'

The trouble was to find the 480 men. The nation was war weary. Every able-bodied man had long since been pressed, or had deserted to American ships. The result was that when the *Newcastle* did sail she carried a disproportionately large number of old men and boys ; even with these useless hands the ship did not carry anything like a full complement. Taking the *Newcastle* as an example of the evils of impressment, Marryat says that trouble began even before they were out of sight of land. When the ship put in to Bantry Bay a number of 'waisters,' desperate to escape before they crossed the ocean, rushed the gangway, knocked down the Marine sentry, and took possession of one of the boats. They were fired on from the deck, but they managed to reach the shore in safety. More desertions took place when they reached America. Indeed by February, 1815, 100 out of a crew of 350 had disappeared. The public expected great things of these new frigates ; but Marryat accounts it fortunate that no engagement was fought with an enemy of equal size. "Had an engagement taken place, the *Newcastle* would have fought under grievous and irremediable disadvantages."

On his return he found that a much more optimistic attitude now prevailed on the American station. Disasters continued to be reported from the campaigns on the Great Lakes, but Broke's great duel with the *Chesapeake* had done much to lighten the gloom. In Europe the power of Napoleon had finally cracked. Sir Alexander Cochrane, uncle of Lord Cochrane, had been sent out with strong re-

inforcements, including the flower of the Peninsular Army. He pursued a more vigorous policy than his predecessor, for, as he said, "I have it much at heart to give the Americans a good drubbing before peace is made." With additional ships the British could now tighten the blockade. How effectively trade was strangled is shown by a comparison of U.S. trade returns : in 1811 \$45 million, in 1814 \$7 million. Benefiting by long and arduous experience in European waters, British ships patrolled every port in every weather. Squadrons anchored in the estuaries ; the white sails of the blockaders could be seen outside every harbour ; unprotected vessels were snapped up under the very eyes of the militia coast guards. None the less, the redoubtable little force of American frigates continued to sink or capture anything which challenged them upon the high seas and successfully preyed upon merchant shipping in the very chops of the English Channel.

Marryat's new captain was an improvement on Taylor ; but he was a very different type to Townshend the tarpaulin. Lord George Stuart was a 'gentleman' captain of the incompetent type which had burdened the Navy from the seventeenth century onwards. He never for a moment allowed his officers to forget that he was a lord. Seamanship he regarded as something beneath the dignity of a man of rank. His talk was of Almack's, and he used the ship's drinking water only for his bath tub. "A smart, dapper, well made man, with a handsome but not intellectual countenance ; cleanly and particular in his person. . . . He had been many years at sea ; but strange to say knew nothing, literally nothing, of his profession."

"Mr. What's-your-name," he drawled to the officer

of the watch, "have the goodness to—what do ye call 'em—the—the—thingumbob."

"Aye, aye, my lord. After guard! haul taut the weather main brace!"

Soon after their arrival in American waters they captured two large privateers. One was the *Prince de Neufchatel*, a remarkably fine schooner, mounting 18 guns and pierced for 22. Her build was so much admired that it was proposed to use her for a model in Deptford dockyard. Unfortunately her back was accidentally broken, and she was sold for a trifle a few months later. The other prize was the *Ida* privateer, 12 guns. Her captain, Pierce by name, later described Stuart as an elegant ass. At the same time he paid Marryat as handsome a compliment as he ever received in his life.

In 1838, when Marryat was one of the most popular novelists of the day, he was prevailed upon to visit the United States on a lecturing tour of the type familiar to modern best-sellers. At a dinner at Cincinnati he received the reward with which a small act of kindness seldom meets. After the toast had been given, a gentleman got up at the end of the table to welcome the lecturer. To Marryat's astonishment it was Captain Pierce. The newspaper report of the latter's speech is as follows:

Nearly twenty-four years had transpired since he first had the pleasure of his (Marryat's) acquaintance. Commanding a privateer out of Boston, the *Ida* brig of 12 guns, and at that time east of the Grand Bank of Newfoundland, having previously captured three British vessels, he was himself captured by the British frigate *Newcastle*, after a hard chase, and in the night forced into the body of a British fleet of merchantmen, under convoy of twelve British men-of-war; the whole fleet numbering about 160 sail.

That himself, officers and crew were in a short time shifted to the *Newcastle*, which was commanded by Lord George Stewart. That during forty days, the time which he was a prisoner on board that ship, he was treated by her commander with indignity, hardness and severity, and wholly without cause.

That there was an order from this Lord George Stewart to all his officers, commanding them to hold no communication with the prisoners, which prevented any alleviation of their sufferings, and they were huddled together between the guns of the main deck.

Our guest at that time was the junior lieutenant of the *Newcastle*, then about twenty years of age. That he, and he alone, broke the unnecessary and unseamanlike order, and meliorated in a degree, not only his situation, but that of his fellow prisoners. . . . Lieutenant Marryat was the first man belonging to the frigate who spoke to him. He was the man that took him by the hand as he went over the ship's side, on his way to prison and said, "Pierce, be of good cheer." From that to the present time he had never met him. He was proud to take him by the hand at this time, and greet him with feelings not rare among seamen. During the time he was on board the frigate he had abundant proofs of the bravery and humanity of Lieutenant Frederick Marryat; and that as long as life should last he should with pleasure reflect on the good conduct of this gentleman while they were on the ocean together, and with pride at his reception in the city of Cincinnati.

He offered as a toast :

"Health and long life to Captain Frederick Marryat, the man who, under the dictates of humanity, dared to break through the rules of a tyrant, and be what every seaman should be—generous and noble."

The memory of the war of 1812 died hard in America. What is to us nothing but a footnote in national history still figures largely in the memory of the citizens of the United States. This is partly due to the resentment caused by the savagery which marks the last year of the war. Ruthless pillaging and destruction devastated the fishing villages along the coast. Trained in the hard school of Spanish warfare, British troops burned Washington itself, although they were defeated near New Orleans. Naval officers detested a mode of warfare so alien to the chivalry of the sea. Chamier, for example, writes : "Let us hope this disgraceful savage

mode of warfare will never again be countenanced by civilized nations. It will be a blot on our escutcheons as long as the arms of England exist." Orders had indeed been issued to "respect private property and pay for what you take"; but the smoke of burning villages from the Chesapeake to the Bay of Fundy proved how seldom those orders were obeyed.

In the autumn of 1814 a Boston paper reports—"The Eastern coast is much vexed by the enemy. Having destroyed a great portion of the coasting craft, they seem determined to enter the little outposts and villages, and burn everything that floats."

On December 19th Marryat himself was engaged in just such work. It was blowing a sleet blizzard when Stuart ordered him to take the barge with a midshipman and a few sailors to cut out four vessels in Boston Bay. As soon as they were within musket shot of the shore they were greeted with a volley from a party of concealed militiamen. Though four men were hit, Marryat urged the rest to pull for the vessels lying at anchor. Two of them were found to be aground, so they were burned where they lay. Marryat deputed the midshipman to take out one of the others, while he himself boarded the largest. Although his men continued to be harassed with musketry fire, both vessels were successfully cut out. As soon as they made the open sea the blizzard turned to a gale. The midshipman's prize was wrecked, and Marryat's handful of survivors only just managed to ride out the storm. His crew was in a miserable state, without water or drink, and in a bitter snowstorm. On the third day they rejoined the frigate forty miles from where they had left her. We know from other sources that the

affair cost eleven lives ; Marryat himself tells us all we wish to know about the conduct of Lord George Stuart. "I was mad with hunger and cold, and with difficulty did we get up the side, so exhausted and feeble were the whole of us. I was ordered down into the cabin, for it was too cold for the captain to show his face on deck. I found his lordship sitting before a good fire, with his toes on the grate and a decanter of Madeira before him."

Throughout the winter the *Newcastle* and *Leander*, assisted by the *Acasta* sloop, cruised up and down the coast of New England. Their duty was to blockade Boston, where the famous American frigate *Constitution* (Captain Stewart) lay ready to put to sea. One day a party of Americans came off in a fishing boat to look over the *Leander*. Her Captain allowed them to come on board. After seeing the ship one of the Americans said, "You are a larger ship, but I do not think your men are so stout as ours on board the *Constitution*." The British Captain replied : "They may be very little, but their hearts are in the right place ; and I will thank you to inform the American captain that, if he will come out and meet the *Leander*, I will pledge my word and honour that no British ship shall be within twenty leagues ; and further, if my ship mounts more guns than the *Constitution*, I will throw the additional guns overboard."

The American, however, slipped out unawares. Her captain learned from a deserter from the *Newcastle* that his namesake had moved south to Cape Cod. Taking the opportunity, he escaped across the Atlantic. By the New Year he was cruising leisurely up the coast of Portugal.

The *Newcastle* followed, but at a considerable distance. In February, 1815, she was at Madeira. Here Marryat suffered a recurrence of his lung trouble. He was allowed home on sick leave, sailing in the *Conway* brig (24). A few days after his departure the *Constitution* captured two British sloops without any interference from the *Newcastle*. The prizes were taken to the Cape Verde Islands, where the American sighted the British squadron. As the captains on both sides were ignorant of the fact that peace negotiations had already been concluded, an action seemed imminent. But the British ships were mismanaged in such a lubberly fashion that the *Constitution* got clean away. At the end of the war Stewart's was the only American frigate which had evaded capture or blockade.

The Treaty of Ghent, in time-honoured phrase, restored the *status quo*. The war had cost the United States the major part of her trade, but her navy had won a fine reputation. Britain gained nothing, except a feeling that all was not well with the Navy. However, any qualms on that score mattered little in 1815. Naval reform could be conveniently shelved until the Whigs came into power twenty years later. It was enough to know that Napoleon had been beaten and that the Great War was over at last.

CHAPTER XI

SIGNALS AND THE PRESS GANG

When I was on the yard, the topsails for to furl,
The pilot came on board and said, " There's peace with all the world " ;
But if war should come again I'm damned if I won't enter
And for my country and my King, my life and limb I'll venture.

Song of 1815.

THE conclusion of peace benefits everybody except an officer who has made one of the Services his profession. As with many a lieutenant at the end of the last war, Marryat's prospect of further advancement in his chosen profession now became extremely slight.

The Navy was speedily and drastically reduced to peace strength, and there was no British Legion to represent the thousands who were thrown out of employment. In 1815 there were 99 ships of the line in commission, and 140,000 seamen. Two years later the peace establishment amounted to no more than 13 of the line, and 19,000 men. Ships which had led the van gloriously into battle were now ignominious hulks rotting in every creek in the kingdom ; at the great ports hundreds of guns lay rusting on the quays ; along the roads of England trudged disheartened sailors and soldiers, many of them already incapacitated for shore jobs by wounds received in the service of their country.

Most of the four thousand naval lieutenants were in nearly as desperate a plight. In June, 1815, Marryat

was promoted Commander, or Captain, as that rank was usually called, the modern Captain being the equivalent of a Post-Captain of those days. It is said that his promotion was delayed a few months on account of the scurrilous caricatures he had drawn of Lord George Stuart and others. 'Captain Marryat.' But what was the good of that in 1815? There were 850 captains and 60 admirals, all of them his seniors.

It was just as difficult to find a shore billet as it was in 1920. Sir Walter Scott writes: "Every avenue to employment is choked with applicants, for the number of disbanded officers is greatly increasing." The Navy List was clogged with superfluous officers because there was no compulsory retiring age. The only hope for a man in Marryat's position was influence at the Admiralty. As he was not the protégé of any particular Admiral, all he could do was to put his name down on the Admiralty List; and that, as Captain Basil Hall says, was "well known to be formidably intricate in its arrangements, and very slippery in its promises, being dependent on the fluctuating interests of party politics." After the war there was not much fluctuation of parties. The reactionary Melville was First Lord till 1827, and Croker (the Rigby of *Coningsby*) was Secretary for twenty years. Hence the complaint of naval officers that "since the peace, interest has taken the lead in the employment of officers to the almost entire exclusion of merit."

Marryat's best hopes lay in the scientific and exploratory expeditions encouraged during the years of peace. He spent two years, chiefly in Italy, "acquiring a perfect knowledge of such branches of science as might prove useful, should the Lords of the Admiralty

think fit to employ him in a voyage of discovery." He had his chance in 1818, when he volunteered to accompany a young scientist named Ritchie on an expedition to Fez and Timbuctoo ; but he later excused himself for domestic reasons.* Ritchie, greatly disappointed, set off by himself, though he was fortunate enough to pick up a certain Lieutenant Lyon on his way out. Lyon learned Arabic, dressed like a native, shaved his head, grew a beard and travelled under the name of Said-ben-abd-Alla. How much would we give to have Marryat's account of such an adventure !

The original proposal did, however, inspire him with the idea of a cartoon which caused much amusement that autumn. It was entitled "Puzzled which to Choose ; or the King of Timbuctoo offering one of his Daughters in Marriage to Captain —— (Anticipated result of the African Expedition)" It is a garish caricature engraved by Cruikshank in his crudest style. A potbellied old king presents his three daughters, dusky beauties with vast bosoms and protuberant backsides, to a naval officer with a turned up nose, who is clearly Marryat himself. It proved surprisingly popular : Marryat even found it displayed in the shops at Bombay ten years later.

A note to his agent from the gallant Captain at Brighton on November 25th, 1818, shows why he failed Ritchie at the last moment :

" My dear Sir,—Courting is so expensive that I must thank you to send me down £20 or I shall not have enough to pay my lodgings before I quit."

* Ritchie was a friend of many writers of the younger generation ; an amusing account of Lamb's eccentric behaviour at the farewell party given in his honour will be found in Haydon's autobiography.

The lady in question was Catharine Shairp of Houston, Co. Linlithgow, daughter of H. M. Chargé d’Affaires at St. Petersburg. The marriage took place in January, 1819. Unfortunately we know very little about Kate Marryat. It seems to have been a happy marriage for many years, but in later life the two drifted apart. Kate was too strait-laced for such a rowdy character as Frederick Marryat. A sour, hysterical wife who disapproved of his Bohemian proclivities, particularly of his friendship with the notorious Lady Blessington, did not altogether suit the Marryat of the uproarious ’thirties.

It was about this time that he came to know George Cruikshank, a Bohemian if ever there was one. The Cruikshank of those days was one who loved low life, the bottle and ‘the Fancy’ a cheerful, vulgar genius who had inherited Gillray’s position as a political cartoonist of unlicensed humour. He detested soldiers, but he loved a drunken sailor. He used to say that “it was by the merest chance that I did not go into the Navy; and with my knowledge of such matters, no doubt I would have been a rear-admiral.” Most of this knowledge he acquired from Marryat, with whom he collaborated in a number of cartoons on social and nautical matters. Cruikshank’s naval work, much of it still uncatalogued, includes some of his best drawings and forms a vivid picture of sea-going life in those days. His first sheet of naval drawings, published in 1819, is called *The Sailor’s Progress*. Then, in 1820, he published a sequel entitled *The Life of a Midshipman, or the Life of Mr. Blockhead*—8 engravings based on 11 sketches by Marryat, many of which are reproduced in this volume. In 1826 he illustrated *Greenwich Hospital*, by Captain

Barker, and in 1835 *Tough Yarns*, by the same author, the latter book being dedicated to Marryat.

It was apparently on the strength of his caricatures that Marryat was elected Fellow of the Royal Society in 1819. Probably his friendship with Charles Babbage, the eminent mathematician, had more to do with it. In those days the Royal Society was more catholic in its membership than it is to-day ; it included a number of naval officers, such as Captain Basil Hall and Captain Foster. But it was a strange honour for a man of 27 who had spent most of his life at sea. Scientific soirées now took the place of climbing aloft in a gale. A hitherto unpublished letter to his schoolfellow, Babbage, accepting an invitation to join the newly founded Astronomical Society, shows what a different sort of life he had already begun to lead :

My dear Charles,—I belong to so many erudite societies that I shall soon have the whole alphabet at my heels ; as however, I like the idea of yours, I beg you will inscribe Capt. Marryat, R.N., F.R.S., F.L.S., F.G.S., F.W.S., etc. etc., among the members, leaving out by the bye all the letters I have annexed to my name as they will think me some new comet by the length of my tail.—You might as well have let me know how your wife was, while you were about it, but I, of course, know that when science is on the Tapis, all other information is secondary. I shall be in town in a fortnight and will come and ask myself.

Yours truly,

FREDERICK MARRYAT.

During these years of enforced leisure he carried out what was perhaps his most important work, as a naval officer—the compilation of a Code of Signals for use in the Merchant Service.

He may not have had any influence at the Admiralty, but in Joseph Marryat he had a most useful backer. Joseph was elected Chairman of Lloyd's with monotonous

regularity from 1811 till his death in 1824. He reached this position as a reward for the services he had rendered to the Society in 1810. In that year a group of insurance companies tried to break the so-called monopoly of marine insurance held by Lloyd's. Their attack was not confined to the City. In Parliament it fell to Joseph Marryat, member for Sandwich, to defend the Society in one committee after another. He was not a graceful speaker, but he excelled in energetic argument. He pointed out that Lloyd's was not a monopoly in the usual sense of the term, and that by splitting up a policy amongst a number of underwriters payment was much more certain than if the policy had been issued by a single company. He followed up these pugnacious speeches with a slashing pamphlet distinguished, even in the days of Cobbett, by its vigour and acrimony. Angerstein was Chairman that year; when he retired Marryat was elected in his stead. It is no exaggeration to say that modern Lloyd's owes its existence to those two men.

Reigning thus supreme over the House Committee, Joseph was in an admirable position to further his son's interests. It was probably Joseph who drew his attention to the inadequate means of signalling at the disposal of merchant vessels. Even in the Navy signalling was a modern development. At the end of the previous century the reforms of Howe and Kempenfelt had replaced the antiquated Fighting Instructions with the modern method of numeral flags. In 1803, Sir Home Popham's *Marine Vocabulary* provided the basis of all future flag signals. Nelson's famous signal was made in twelve hoists according to this code, the word 'duty' having to be spelled letter by letter because

it did not appear in the *Vocabulary*. Popham's code became so popular that "an alarming loquacity prevailed afloat." So much so that in 1816 a new rating, that of Yeoman of the Signals, had to be established.

Merchant skippers remained comparatively dumb. The East India Company had, indeed, persuaded Popham to compile a book of commercial and military signals, but the result was almost exclusively military. In 1812 a Liverpool agent of Lloyd's evolved a primitive method of signalling; but this was so unsatisfactory that the Marryats set to work to provide a more fluent system, whereby ships could make their specific needs known to other ships or to their agents on shore. "The Master of a merchant vessel who sees another steering into danger," says Marryat in his preface, "has at present no means to warn her of it, but must endure the agonizing sensation of following her with his eyes, till she is dashed to pieces on the rocks. . . . Independent of these important considerations, great advantage would arise to all parties interested in maritime concerns, from the establishment of signals. Merchants and Ship Owners would know that their vessels and goods had proceeded so far on their voyage by a given time; Underwriters would have the satisfaction of receiving the same intelligence of the vessels they had insured; and the relatives of passengers and crews would have the pleasing information that their friends were well."

The problem Marryat solved in his *Code of Signals* was how to provide an inexpensive and simple system, which did not interfere with the Naval Code. He adopted Popham's method of making flags talk. The Code is divided into six parts. The first contains a list of men-of-war; a distinguishing flag (the Union

Jack) hoisted over a numeral flag denotes the part of the Code and the number under which the ship's name is listed. Part II contains a similar list of merchant vessels, the numeral flag referring to the name in Lloyd's Register. Part III gives the names of various ports, headlands, reefs, etc. Part IV, in which a distinguishing flag is not used, contains a selection of sentences, and Parts V and VI a vocabulary and an alphabet. Thus a signal with three flags, numbers 9, 4, 3, refers to Part IV, sentence No. 943—"War has been declared." No. 932—"Do you understand?" No. 934—"I understand." When the introduction of steam made additions necessary all that had to be done was to insert a few more sentences :

No. 5298—"Is your steam up?"

No. 5301—"My steam is up and I am ready."

At the end of his life Marryat was able to claim with justice that his code had been adopted "in almost every quarter where the British ensign is unfurled."

Such was the code to which Joseph Marryat drew the attention of the Society of Ship Owners in November, 1817. A certain Mr. Urquhart refers in sub-acid tones to "*the expressive manner*" in which Joseph spoke at the meeting. "When it is considered that Captain Marryat is the *son* of the Chairman of the Committee of Lloyd's, I am sure the shipowners, and the public will do every justice to the very ingenious manner by which it has been brought forward." Nepotism there may have been ; but the very fact that the code became universally popular shows that the action was also a public service.

As soon as the use of the code had been agreed upon by the Society, every master of a vessel, every agent of Lloyd's, every coastguard station had to purchase a copy. In 1822, however, the Admiralty raised an

objection. A law was passed punishing the abuse of His Majesty's colours with a fine of £500. The Society of Ship Owners pointed out that this made Part I of Marryat's Code unworkable. To this the Secretary of the Admiralty replied: "The Union Jack is the distinctive and peculiar colour of His Majesty's ships and has been appropriated to them and forbidden to all other vessels from the earliest period of Maritime Regulations." Marryat was therefore asked to do something about it. He replied to the Society of Ship Owners from Portsmouth on April 30th, 1823: "As their Lordships seem to be decided as to the necessity of the alterations being made in the Code of Signals, it remains to consider how their Lordships' commands may be obeyed, without occasioning inconvenience and confusion." A Red Ensign *coupée* (i.e., a Jack with a red margin) would meet the case. With the substitution of a white margin for a red, Marryat's suggestion became law in July 1823: "The Signal Jack to be worn by the Merchant Ships shall have a white Border all round, such Border being one fifth of the breadth of the Jack itself."

Once this difficulty had been overcome, the Code was widely adopted. In December, 1822, a French newspaper reports: "The telegraphic signals used by the merchant vessels in England and common to those of other nations (e.g., U.S.A., Holland, Italy) are, by order of the Minister of the Marine, to be used in the fleet." Until the introduction of Colomb's code of flashes in 1867 (popularly known as the Morse Code) Marryat's flags held the field. In 1845 he added a semaphore code for land telegraph. In 1837 he sold the copyright, stipulating that he should receive a quarter

of the profits for the rest of his life. As new editions were brought out every few years, it is probable that he made more money from his Signals than he did from any novel he ever wrote.

A few years after his death steps were taken to draw up an International Code. One of the questions the Committee was asked was : ' Whether Marryat's flags being then generally in use on board merchant ships of this and foreign countries, and also at many foreign signal stations, it would not be convenient to adopt them as far as possible ? ' To this the Committee assented. Thus Marryat's Code formed the basis of the first International Code.

It also gave rise to a trivial little book entitled *The Floral Telegraph ; or Affection's Signals*, by Mr. Horace Honeycombe. This prettily illustrated conceit enabled lovers to exchange messages by tying knots in the ribbons of bunches of flowers. Whether Marryat himself was the author we cannot say ; but it appeared in the magazine he was then editing, and it certainly parodies his own work.

The Press Gang is probably the aspect of life in the Old Navy which figures most vividly in most people's imagination. This melodramatic subject also occupied Marryat's mind during the years of peace. Even though he knew, as he told a Reformist audience when he stood for Parliament in 1833, " that to meddle with a subject the Ministers wished to keep quiet was to risk his promotion," he published in 1822 a pamphlet entitled *Suggestions for the Abolition of the Present System of Impressment in the Naval Service*.

The subject attracted a great deal of attention in the years after the war. Humanitarians attacked it as cruel ;

those in the service disliked it because it was inefficient and unpopular. Indeed, says one Captain, the activities of the Press Gang were "little better than seizing slaves on the coast of Africa." Wilberforce, Hume and Whitbread attacked it in the House of Commons, and the pages of the *Naval Chronicle* and other periodicals were filled with acrimonious letters attacking or defending that champion of abolition, the egregious Mr. Urquhart. As long as the country was at war, any method of recruitment was regarded as legitimate. After the peace, however, many agreed with what Nelson had said : "Something should be attempted to make our seamen, at the din of war, fly to our navy, instead of flying from it."

Those who advocate conscription in our own day might learn something from the history of the Press Gang. Impressment was costly (Nelson reckoned it cost £20 to press a single man) ; it was inefficient, as the astronomical figures of desertion prove ; and since it ran directly contrary to national tradition, it was of extremely dubious legality. It was an ancient practice buttressed by Acts of Parliament which authorised magistrates to draft into the navy 'all lewd and disorderly men, servants, and every such person or persons : men and boys that are deemed and adjudged rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars (not being felons)' In later years even felons were welcomed.

"I have brought a volunteer to serve in His Majesty's fleet," shouts someone from a boat alongside.

"Well," answers the captain, "knock off his irons and hand him up."

The kernel of a ship's crew consisted of the forecastle men, men bred to the sea ; Marryat describes how the

remainder, the 'idlers' in the waist, were recruited : " During the late war, the Navy was a receptacle for men of all descriptions ; almost every gaol and work-house in the United Kingdom furnished its quota ; men who were unmanageable in the merchant service were sent on board a ship of war, by which means that service became purged of all its worst characters ; rogues, vagrants, thieves and convicts (who had been serving in the hulks) had their punishments commuted by serving the Navy. Smugglers of the worst and most desperate characters, clerks and labourers of every class and description who for malpractices, drunken and idle habits, and other causes, had been turned out of their situations, and from the badness of their conduct and characters, could not procure employment on shore : deserters from the army, Irish rebels, White Boys, United Irishmen, and foreigners of almost every country." To prove this he analyses the Muster Book of a typical line-of-battle ship in 1805, the *San Domingo*. He finds 15 farmers, 5 printers, 6 hatters, 4 cotton spinners, 3 pedlars, 1 optician, 1 umbrella maker, 1 violin maker, etc.

Imperious necessity was the only excuse for forcing such unhappy souls on board. The consequences were serious. When an 'old lag' messes alongside a respectable umbrella maker things begin to happen. The sternest methods were necessary to preserve discipline among the riff-raff in the waist. This, in turn, gave the Navy a bad name. The result was that recruiting became even more difficult than before.

At the beginning of the war 'that bloody tyrant, William Pitt' organised impressment on a more efficient basis. The country was divided into 26 areas

commanded by 'Yellow Admirals'; each county provided a proportionate quota from its gaols and work-houses. A bounty was offered to volunteers. The reaction of the average seaman to a volunteer of this type is illustrated by the story of the gigantic boatswain who picked up one of them by the slack of his trousers, and, holding him out at arm's length, shouted: "Here is the b—that cost a guinea a pound!" By 1812 the need for 'volunteers' was so great that 'all strong bodies capable to serve the king' were caught wherever they could be found—in ports and cities, by fast sailing smacks which intercepted merchantmen returning to port, even off vessels on the high seas. A shot across the bows was the signal to back topsails and heave to. As the cutter came alongside there was often a show of resistance: a shot might be dropped overboard to stave in the boat, or the boarders were knocked on the head with marline spikes as they came up the side. But sooner or later the best men in the crew would be overpowered and transported to the decks of one of His Majesty's ships of war. Men returning from the two years' voyage in an East Indiaman would be pressed within sight of home for another three or five years without seeing anything of their wives or families. Nominally, of course, watermen, fishermen, etc., were exempted; but, as the case of Jacob Faithful shows, such 'protection' did not amount to much in practice.

If a ship was still short of men when on the point of sailing, a lieutenant was ordered to make a Hot Press of all the taverns and brothels in the port. The most exciting scenes in Marryat's novels are those based on personal experience when the Gang visited the local 'crimp's' den, the hide-out for sailors on the run.

Sometimes a midshipman like Peter Simple accompanied the gang, with embarrassing consequences—

“Vell,” cried the woman who made me a prisoner, “only look at the little biscuit nibbler showing fight ! Come, my lovely, you belongs to me.”

“Never !” exclaimed I with indignation. “Keep off, or I shall do you a mischief” (and I raised my dirk in advance) ; “I am an officer and a gentleman.”

“Sall,” cried the odious woman, “fetch a mop and a pail of dirty water, and I’ll trundle that dirk out of his fist.”

As far as the recruitment of officers was concerned, Marryat says that, at the time he joined, the Navy was considered only as a career “for all refractory and unruly boys, and I may perhaps safely add, for all stupid ones.” But he admits that the popularity of the service had greatly increased as a result of “the judicious regulations adopted by the Admiralty” against the exercise of influence. He disagrees with Urquhart’s suggestion that officers could be drawn from the merchant service, and also with his plan for promoting men from before the mast. “Occasionally, but very rarely, it may be done with justice to the individual, and with advantage to the service ; but, generally speaking, you lose a good man, and make a bad officer.”

The real difficulty, of course, was how to get the men, not the officers. There were more senior officers in the service in 1822 than at any period of the war. The Navy had a bad reputation, particularly in the merchant service, “the chief nursery of seamen for the British Navy.” As a result of the methods adopted at the end of the war, the two services were “in a state of constant warfare. . . . A young lad, before he has been one month

an apprentice in a merchant vessel, from the discourses of his messmates forms much the same idea of a man of war as he does of Newgate." Marryat is at pains to show that recent reforms made this prejudice totally unjustifiable. "Whoever has been fifteen years in the Navy, and will compare what took place at the period of his entrance with the present usages in the service, must acknowledge the truth of the above assertion. Swearing and abusive language, the oppression in the midshipmen's berth, the custom of starting, and severe punishments at the gangway, have been discountenanced and checked. A quarterly return of all punishments inflicted is sent up to the Admiralty, for inspection and approval."

Better and more punctual pay was the most important reform. A naval rating received under thirty shillings a month, less than half the amount paid in the merchant service. "It was formerly not unusual for ships employed abroad to be three, five, seven years, and even a longer period, without receiving any pay. According to the present regulations, ships are not kept out more than two years, and have an advance previously to their sailing. On the home station they are paid regularly every six months." He then makes the suggestion, not altogether a new one,* that "every apprentice, from the period of his entering the merchant service, to be protected for a term of six years, and after six years are expired, to be obliged to serve seven years in his Majesty's Navy, or provide a substitute." To recruit artificers, carpenters, servants, etc., Marryat advises something like conscription: "in my humble opinion,

* See Napier, *Letters from a Post Captain*. . . . 1816. *Edinburgh Review*, 1824. *Metropolitan Mag.*, Vol. VIII. *Naval Chronicle*, Volumes 37-40.

the raising of them by militia is the only just and advisable means to use." But as he admits that "it is the *compulsion to serve*, not the service, which creates the disgust," this remedy cannot be said to be helpful. Indeed he appears to have realised this, and for that reason withdrew his pamphlet from circulation.

Nevertheless his suggestions seem to have had some effect even on the Admiralty of Melville's day. Marshall, the proofs of whose brief biography Marryat himself revised, says : " A few months after its appearance, his Majesty's ministers put this suggestion in force (that all merchant vessels should carry apprentices proportionate to their tonnage), taking the scale proposed by Captain Marryat as their guide." But the wider demands of Naval reformers like Marryat were not met until the Whigs came into power. Sir James Graham made it illegal for a man to serve more than five years against his will ; and finally, in 1852, the system of Continuous Service was introduced. But the evil influence of the Press Gang was so lasting that when the Crimean War broke out Napier had to man the Baltic fleet chiefly with Dutchmen and Danes.

An incident which occurred some years later helps to explain why Marryat, in spite of his brilliant record, failed to obtain promotion. In recognition of the value of his Signal Code the King of France conferred on him the Croix d'Officier of the Legion of Honour. When William IV (Sailor Billy) was approached by a Cabinet minister to obtain permission for him to wear the order, the King replied, " You best know his services ; give him what you please." Then, as the minister was about to leave the room, William suddenly shouted

“Marryat ! Marryat ! By the bye, is not that the man who wrote a book against the impressment of seamen ? ”

“The same, your Majesty.”

“Then he shan’t wear the order ; he shall have nothing ! ”

CHAPTER XII

NAPOLEON AND THE SMUGGLERS

O my true love's a smuggler and sails upon the sea,
And I would I were a seaman to go along with he ;
To go along with he for the satins and the wine,
And run the tubs at Slapton when the stars do shine.

Song to the air of *The White Cockade*.

ON June 13th, 1820, after five years' life ashore, Marryat was appointed to one of the smallest and oldest ships in the fleet—the *Beaver*, a ten gun brig. She belonged to what he called an 'unservicable and dangerous class' which had a reputation for foundering. He comments wryly on the appointment in *Newton Forster*: "I condescended to take the command to oblige the first Lord of the Admiralty ; offered, I believe, to *provide* for me, to rid the Board of all further solicitations for employment or promotion."

Leaving his wife and son (Frederick had been born on October 6th, 1819) at his father's house at Wimbledon, he went down to Portsmouth to take over his first command. His orders were pleasantly vague—to show the flag and apprehend any privateers at Madeira, Tristan d'Acunha and St. Helena. We can imagine his pride when he hoisted his pennant and opened a Muster Book on board. First of all a nucleus of petty officers was collected ; then a rendezvous opened at some inn, where the name of the ship, her destination

and her captain's credentials were announced. A few personal visits there on the part of the captain, many rounds of drinks at his expense, a word or two with unemployed sailors lounging on the Common Hard, and his crew was complete. The captain was then piped aboard and read his commission to the ship's company assembled on the quarter deck.

On September 27th, a few days before the ship sailed, he dined on board the Royal Yacht with George IV. Then came pay day and the motley crowd of bumboat women selling handkerchiefs, adulterated spirits, knick-knacks for the sailors' 'wives.' At last the Blue Peter was hoisted, the anchor piped up, bumboats shoved off, and the ship stood out to sea.

To reach St. Helena in the days of sail it was necessary to steer a zig-zag course across the Atlantic. After touching at Madeira, the *Beaver* picked up the North East Trades; then came the Calms and Variables, the dulllest part of the voyage, only enlivened by the horseplay of the ceremony of crossing the Line. Coming into the track of the South East Trades, they were carried across to Brazil, bearing east again as soon as they reached the Horse Latitudes. By this time food and water would be running short. But Marryat says there was no need for anxiety on the former count, as long as they kept in the track of the Brazilian traders. Sharks were common wherever slave ships sailed. And by this period of the voyage shark's meat would be accounted quite a delicacy; if fried in butter and liberally sprinkled with salt and pepper it tasted almost like coarse cod.

Nowadays few people would know of the existence of Tristan d'Acunha if it did not provide the press with

copy about lonely islanders. Even in the days of sail it was important only as a whaling station. Marryat says that few vessels called there because the island was so difficult of access. The *Beaver* heaved to some two miles off shore to avoid the danger of being carried on to the iron bound coast by the heavy swell which runs in those parts. Boats were lowered to take the water butts on shore to be refilled. This gave Marryat the opportunity of interviewing the solitary European inhabitant, an ex-artillery private who called himself the Emperor in rivalry of his neighbour fifteen hundred miles to the north east. "His present Imperial Majesty had, at the time of my visit, a black consort and many snuff coloured princes and princesses. He was in other respects a perfect Robinson Crusoe ; he had a few head of cattle and some pigs," a dozen fowls, and a patch of potatoes.

St. Helena was a more important place. The property of 'John Company,' few vessels omitted to call there on their three months' voyage from the Cape. During the war merchantmen collected there to form a convoy for the rest of the voyage home. But in 1815 few, except those engaged in the East Indian trade, had ever heard of that desolate rock of basalt. For the next five years it was the most talked-of place in the world. As Napoleon was fully aware, the eyes of Europe were upon him in his exile. Up to 1819 he was never without hope of escape, nor did he miss a single opportunity to invite sympathy by advertising the ridiculous regulations of 'that damned fool,' Sir Hudson Lowe.

A warning gun from the towering cliffs, which rose sheer out of the ocean, welcomed the *Beaver* on March 4th, 1821. Marryat heaved to off Sugar Loaf Point

in accordance with the detailed instructions issued by the Governor. If a boat was not sent in to the roadstead at Jamestown to report the arrival of a vessel, the batteries on the cliffs had instructions to open fire immediately.

Sir Hudson Lowe suffered from suspicion mania. As long as he was the Emperor's gaoler he was taking no chances. A submarine vessel was said to be fitting out in Brazil to effect a rescue. Night and day sentries manned the look-outs and a frigate patrolled the coast. Rear-Admiral Lambert, who flew his flag in the *Vigo*, had the strictest instructions to allow none but privileged vessels to communicate with the shore. Taking the refitting station at the Cape into account, the cost of keeping Napoleon a prisoner cost the nation £400,000 a year and the services of over 3,000 men.

By the time of Marryat's arrival the Emperor seems to have realised that Europe was losing interest in his martyrdom. The exile had nothing to interest himself in, save the squabbles of his household and his continual warfare with Sir Hudson Lowe. He had long since severed all connection with the man whose "eye is that of a hyaena caught in a trap." Even the guard, whose business it was to report daily on Napoleon's presence, could only catch an occasional glimpse of his illustrious prisoner by peeping between the blinds when the Emperor was in his bath. He was no longer to be seen cantering over the wind-swept plateau of Longwood, or directing his Chinese gardeners at their work. On March 19th, a fortnight after Marryat's arrival, he went out of doors for the last time. Perhaps Marryat had a glimpse through a telescope of the almost spherical figure in nankeen trousers and a wide brimmed

straw hat. Such was the Corsican ogre he had spent most of his life in fighting.

Meanwhile he had his own troubles on board the *Beaver*. "May 1st. Weighed and made sail to cruise to windward ; but was recalled in consequence of being attacked with dysentery and *Cholera morbus* on the 3rd."

That day and the next a violent gale blew up, which gave rise to the romantic myth that Napoleon died, as a legendary hero should, in the middle of a thunderstorm. But the ship's log shows that May 5th was a day of brilliant sunshine. Early that morning a startling signal was hoisted : "General Bonaparte is in imminent danger." At sunset he was sinking ; a few moments after the evening gun had been fired, he died peacefully before the light faded.

At seven o'clock the next morning the Governor, accompanied by Admiral Lambert, Brigadier-General Pine Coffin, Captains Hendry, Brown and Marryat, made their way up to Longwood to attend the lying-in-state. They found the Emperor's staff gathered around the camp bed of Austerlitz, on which their master lay dead. It was the first time any of the British had seen him at close quarters for many years. All were amazed at his youthful appearance, the unwrinkled ivory skin, the fine features and almost feminine hands. The official recognition took place in silence. The Governor saluted, and the officers filed out.

It was essential that a likeness of the Emperor's features should be taken before the post-mortem began that afternoon. As plaster was not at first obtainable for a cast, General Montholon authorised Marryat to sketch the face. He had to work rapidly, for the post-mortem

began at two o'clock. He took the greatest care with his drawing of the head, only roughing in the body under the counterpane. He appears to have done several sketches, but only one can now be traced.* This was sent with the Governor's despatches by the sloop *Heron* which sailed for England the same evening.

The funeral took place on May 9th. While Mass was celebrated inside the house, Marryat and the other British representatives formed up on the lawn outside. The coffin, with the cloak worn by the Emperor at Marengo thrown over it, was carried out on the shoulders of a party of Grenadiers. At noon the procession moved off. Garrison troops lined the route, and groups of islanders collected at various points of vantage. First came a regiment of soldiers ; then the hearse, draped in purple velvet ; then Bertrand, Montholon and the chief mourners. Behind the Emperor's charger (originally called King George, but promptly renamed Sheikh by its new owner), came the carriage of the ladies of the household. A file of midshipmen marched in front of the Governor, and the naval and military officers brought up the rear. Marryat's drawing of the procession is correct in all but one detail : the chief mourners are shown following, instead of preceding the Emperor's charger.

On the lip of the Devil's Punchbowl the coffin was taken from the hearse to be borne on the shoulders of Grenadiers down the steep path to the Vale of Geraniums. The Minute gun of the flagship boomed out

* This is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, Room 81, Press 8. It was later touched up by Ibbetson, the artist who illustrated some of his novels. His drawing of the funeral procession, engraved by Alken, is in the Print Room of the British Museum. Both drawings are reproduced in Norwood Young : *Napoleon in Exile*, Vol. II. See also *Times Lit. Sup.*, Oct. 17th, Nov. 2nd, 1935.

while the funeral march was played by the regimental band. As the coffin was lowered into the willow shaded grave, three volleys of musketry were fired into the air ; from afar the shore batteries and ships' guns echoed the salute.

The news reached London on July 4th, only two days before Marryat himself anchored in Spithead with duplicate despatches. It was immediately telegraphed to Paris. "In neither country," says the *Annual Register*, "did it produce any very strong impression."

On the day of the funeral Marryat was transferred to the command of the *Rosario* sloop, which had been at St. Helena for the past four months. He took with him from the *Beaver* Mr. Fox the boatswain, the captain of the main top, and ten seamen. Captain Hendry of the *Rosario* was appointed to the *Dotterel* brig. As the *Rosario* and the *Beaver* were of the same rate and age, it is difficult to say why this exchange was made. Perhaps it was because the crew of the *Beaver* had been so weakened with dysentery that the ship could not be sailed home. The *Rosario*, however, suffered just as badly ; before she reached England many of those on board, including the purser, had to be buried at sea.

The *Rosario* sailed for England on May 16th. From the first it was obvious that trouble was brewing. When he came on board to take over the comand Marryat found the ship's company "murmuring and discontented." There were many unsatisfactory characters on board, including one fellow who was described as "as great a vagabond as ever was in a ship." Many of the men were suffering from dysentery, and friction soon

developed between the newcomers from the *Beaver* and the original crew of the *Rosario*. Before a month was out the captain had to face a situation which looked unpleasantly like mutiny.

Captain Hendry was entirely to blame for this state of affairs. He appears as Captain Hawkings of the *Rattlesnake* in the concluding chapters of *Peter Simple*, where many of the incidents of this voyage are described. Old Swinburne the boatswain there describes him as "just like a winter's day, short and dirty ; and he walks the deck as if the planks were not good enough for his feet." "A spy captain," he continues, referring to the sergeant of marines who sent up secret reports, "will always find spy followers."

The original of this spy was a certain John Cheetham, sergeant of marines. Soon after Marryat had taken over the command, this fellow, who acted as Master-at-Arms, came to enquire whether he should continue to report on the activities of the ship's company and of the officers as he had done to Captain Hendry. Marryat had already come upon some of these secret reports, which his predecessor had left behind in the cabin. He had not liked the look of them, and he did not like the overbearing manners of Sergeant Cheetham. He found that Cheetham had been employed in sending "secret reports, which were not forwarded according to the rules of the service through the Commanding Officer (i.e., of the watch), but direct from the sergeant to Captain Hendry." Marryat told him there was to be no more of that sort of thing. "The injudicious conduct of Captain Hendry, in allowing an inferior officer to have the power of insinuating anything to the disadvantage of his superiors, without their having the

means of disproving it, was but too apparent. Sergeant Cheetham had been raised so much above his station that he became insolent to the Officers, and tyrannical in the extreme to the ship's Company. Although I immediately took the necessary steps to replace Sergeant Cheetham in his proper sphere of duty, he was shortly after, in my presence, extremely impertinent both in language and in gestures to one of the Midshipmen of the ship, and I then cautioned him on the Quarter Deck that I would take the most serious notice of it if it occurred again."

As a matter of fact Cheetham had called one midshipman a son of a bitch, and told another : " Don't look so black at me, for I have made many a brighter fellow than you look black in the face."

For the first month of the voyage Marryat tried to settle the temper of his crew by relaxing the severity of the discipline. " I allowed every liberty and indulgence that could be granted consistent with the Service." This policy had no effect. " The murmuring and discontent became at last so apparent that I was obliged to take more decisive measures, and having severely punished one man for drunkenness and insolence I desired Mr. Fox the Boatswain to find out the cause of so unpleasant a circumstance." Meanwhile the carpenter was confined to his cabin with both legs in irons.

The next evening the Boatswain came aft. Speaking in the name of the ship's company he told the Captain that they were perfectly satisfied with his treatment of them ; but that " the tyranny and abusive language " used by Cheetham on the lower deck was more than they could stand. Marryat promptly summoned Cheetham

to the quarter deck. "In my opinion," he told him, "you are an austere, perverse fellow, and unworthy to command under me, for you have been guilty of nothing but general tyranny to the Ship's Company." "You were previously," he added, "only kept as a damned spy in the ship." He then reduced Cheetham's rank. For the rest of the voyage the man behaved with perfect satisfaction.

On his return to England Marryat found that Hendry, furious at being deprived of his command, had attempted to make trouble at the Admiralty. He had written to their Lordships accusing Marryat of 'weakness,' and the officers under him of 'vile conduct.' Marryat promptly demanded an enquiry, which was held in Portland Roads by Admiral Sir James Whitshed on November 15th and 16th, 1821.

It was a vitally important moment in Marryat's career as a naval officer. If he could not justify his actions on this, his first command, all chance of promotion would be gone. Fortunately an opportunity for prejudicing Hendry's character in the eyes of the court was provided before the main enquiry started. The ship's clerk, who was one of those accused of 'vile conduct,' presented the Admiral with a testimonial from Hendry himself, stating that he had "performed his duty in every respect to my entire satisfaction." Marryat was able to cap this, and thereby undermine the trustworthiness of the allegations against himself, by showing that Hendry had on two occasions requested him to allow this clerk to join him in the *Dotterel*.

Marryat was thus in a strong position when the enquiry into his treatment of John Cheetham began. The Captain's evidence, together with that of the

boatswain and others, entirely justified his actions. The only dissentient voice was that of the surgeon, who described Cheetham as "a sober, correct man." Marryat jumped to his feet to question this, and the surgeon reluctantly admitted that perhaps Cheetham's conduct had not been suitable for a small ship. As a result of the enquiry Marryat's character and that of his officers was entirely cleared, and he was allowed to continue in command of the ship.

For the rest of the winter the *Rosario* was employed with the Revenue Cutters in the suppression of smuggling in the Channel.

Most people are under the impression that the great days of smuggling were during the eighteenth century. As a matter of fact the trade reached its height between the years 1805 and 1835. In 1821 trade was 'roaring,' to use the smugglers' term. "The profits of this contraband trade," writes Marryat, "are so great that if two cargoes are lost, a third safely landed will indemnify the owner." He reckons that a cask of spirits cost 7/6 at Cherbourg, another 8/- to get it across the Channel, and 6/- more to 'run' it inland. Even then a smuggled cask would cost less than half the price at which it was sold in the shops. If, as Marryat said, seizures amounted to no more than a tenth of the goods smuggled, the seizure figures for 1822-1824 give a staggering impression of the size of the trade: 130 vessels, 746 boats, 135,000 gallons of brandy, 227,000 of gin, 10,500 of whisky, 300 lbs. of snuff, 42,000 yards of silk, 36,000 packs of cards and 23 Leghorn hats.

Thousands of people participated in the trade,

although the numbers of those who actually handled the goods was comparatively small. In certain parts, particularly around Pevensey, the smugglers established a veritable reign of terror. Cargoes were landed in such quantities that the Admiralty established a Coastal Blockade under a notoriously 'tight' captain, known throughout the fleet as Flogging Joey. Two old ships of the line were anchored in the Downs; parties of seamen manned the Martello Towers and patrolled the cliffs within hail of each other. A hundred years ago Eastbourne was far from being a respectable watering place. A certain lieutenant stationed there received the following note one morning:

Sir,—You had better not be so harde on us, for if you do, we will knock out youre branes the furst time we ketch you alone in the dark, and we will kill youre dog.

The next year his successor was found dead with seven bullets in his body.

Marryat was ordered to cruise between Portsmouth and Start Point. Here the defences were not so elaborate; consequently the work of a conscientious officer was all the more arduous. The chief centres along this stretch of coast were Weymouth, Beer and Dartmouth. West of the Start, says Marryat, there was comparatively little smuggling. "I believe I may confidently state that every cargo run on the line of coast above laid down is shipped from the port of Cherbourg."

Like every other organisation in England before the days of reformed parliaments, the Coastguard Service was extraordinarily inefficient. It was run partly by the Board of Customs, partly by the Treasury, partly by the Admiralty. As there were three parties engaged in the contraband trade, so three lines of defence were

evolved to suppress them. First of all there was the owner of the smuggling vessel; then the crew—often seamen who had been in the navy—who received so many shillings for every tub landed; finally the ‘smuggling companies,’ consisting of farmers and landmen, who organised beach parties to land the cargo and run it inland. To combat the smugglers at each stage of their journey there was, firstly, the Preventive Water Guard of fast revenue cutters and naval sloops like the *Rosario*. Patrolling the cliffs was the Coast Guard proper; and for inland work there were the old, much hated Riding Officers, now called the Mounted Guard.

Smuggling scenes abound in Marryat’s novels. Only in *Snarleyvow*, where the scene is seventeenth century England but the details those of a later age, does he describe the melodramatic scenes upon the cliffs so beloved of historical novelists. Bloody fights between the revenue officers and the smugglers in caves and lonely inns are not his subject. What he describes best is the chase of a smuggling lugger across the grey waters of the Channel on a winter evening, from the moment the warning gun is fired to the boarding and searching of the suspected vessel—often as desperate a business as any fight with an enemy privateer. The work of the *Active* in *The Three Cutters* is obviously based on his own experience in the *Rosario*; in *The King’s Own* and in a story in *Olla Podrida* the struggle is told vividly and sympathetically from the smuggler’s point of view. It is to these books we must go for accurate details of the build of smuggling vessels (Marryat calls them the most beautiful vessels ever designed for speed); the rig of the cutters which chased them; the curious petticoats

worn by smugglers to protect their legs when sitting in an open boat ; and the thousand tricks with which they managed to elude the vigilance of the Water Guard.

“Smugglers do not arm now,” he writes, “the Service is too dangerous ; they effect their purpose by cunning, not by force. Nevertheless, it requires that smugglers should be good seamen, smart, active fellows, and keen witted, or they can do nothing. . . . All they ask is a heavy gale or a thick fog, and they trust to themselves for success. In those days,” he adds, “they were not armed with intention to resist ; if they are perceived by the cruisers or revenue vessels, and are pursued, they are obliged (if not able to escape from superior sailing) to throw over their cargo in deep water, and it is lost. The cargo is thrown overboard to avoid the penalty and imprisonment to which it would subject the crew.” The devices adopted for concealing contraband from the keen eyes of searchers were extraordinarily ingenious—hollow booms and figure-heads ; false bottoms ; bales of silk hidden under a cargo of coals ; strands of tobacco twisted into specially devised ropes ; casks concealed in the ballast, or towed astern on a line which could be cast off the moment a hostile sail was sighted, or when the sound of oars gave warning of the approach of a cutter’s boat at night.

If a smuggler timed his departure from Cherbourg to reach the British coast just as dusk was falling, it was possible to land, or ‘work’ the goods into some secluded cove. But in 1821 the more usual practice was to sink a line of tubs, “strung upon a hawser like a row of beads” and weighted with stones, at some

appointed spot close in to the shore, to be picked up a day or two later by some innocent-looking fishing smack when the coast was clear. "When these stones are thrown over the side, the whole cargo runs out with such rapidity that it requires less than two minutes to sink a cargo of three or four hundred tubs. Indeed, the practice of sinking has become general on this part of the coast; the smuggler prefers doing it, whether interrupted or not, as he finds it more safe to raise his cargo in small quantities the ensuing night, and it renders him independent of the beach parties."

Those, like Marryat, who were engaged in the Water Guard had instructions to 'creep' all likely bays by dragging grapnels along the bottom. By digging among the Admiralty records we can discover how far Marryat succeeded in this business.

H.M. Sloop Rosario,

In Portland Roads, Nov. 27th, 1821.

Sir,—I have the honour to inform you that a Boat of H.M. Sloop Rosario stationed of Beer has made the following seizures. Viz: 13 Tubs crept up between the 20 and 22 of November in company with the Scourge's boat; about the same time Thomas Harley in company with a riding officer of Seaton found 28 Tubs in the Marshes near Beer. Three other Tubs were also taken the same day in the Marshes by the men of the Rosario and the Scourge.

I have also the honour to inform you that two men, John Macnamara and James Marsden belonging to the Rosario, discovered on Monday the 19th, a Man of the name of William Dean attending a fire lighted on the cliffs to the Eastward of Beer. He was immediately secured and is now bound over to appear at the next Exeter Quarter Sessions to take his trial for the Offence.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

your most obedient humble servant,

F. MARRYAT, Captain.

On December 12th a further report to the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth, tells how another 39 tubs of spirits were 'creeped up' off Beer.

Before a warm fire in the office of the Navy Board instructions were drafted ordering cutters to be at sea in all weathers. Marryat was conscientious enough to carry out these orders as far as possible. Every evening the *Rosario* drew close in to the land and boats were lowered to row along the coast during the night. Every morning she stood out to sea, ready to intercept any suspicious looking vessel. No more unpleasant way of passing the bleak months of winter could be imagined. Therefore it is not surprising to learn that the revenue cutters (and sometimes the King's Ships) spent most of the time lying comfortably in harbour.

In a report which he submitted to the Admiralty on his recall, Marryat waxes indignant about the slackness of the revenue cutters. Their instructions, he points out, state that "unless forced by stress of weather, they are not to be at anchor for more than twenty-four hours." In actual fact "the vessel is more at anchor than at sea, and when under way is seldom out of sight of the English coast." He admits that the revenue officers, by watching smugglers and farmers on market days, "calculated to great nicety the period and the direction of the vessel's return with their cargoes"; but he points out that the result is only seizure of the cargo, not the vessel. Only by capturing the actual vessels, sawing them up in three sections and drafting their crews into the navy, can the contraband trade be checked. An officer like himself received £150 a year for this sort of work, with an additional £20 'blood money' for every smuggler captured, and shares in the seizures

made. But he soon came to the conclusion that if claims for promotion were made dependent on the capture of the vessel and not on the cargo seized, the result would be far more effective. He even hints that some revenue officers purposely avoid capturing vessels in order to continue earning a modest income by seizing an occasional cargo. Furthermore, he suggests that if a resolute attempt to stamp out smuggling was to be made, the best method would be to draw a cordon round Cherbourg. In that case "his Majesty's cruisers would have a better chance of falling in with the smugglers than when dispersed over a coast of 100 miles circumference."

Service against the smugglers in the Channel was arduous, unpleasant and unpopular. Smugglers were often better seamen than those engaged against them, and Marryat admired a good sailor more than he disliked the contraband trade. Nor had he ever been fond of the old *Rosario*. He was not sorry when she was condemned as unseaworthy and paid off in Portsmouth harbour on February 7th, 1822.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BURMESE WAR

In the years 1186 and 1187 the white strangers of the West fastened a quarrel upon the Lord of the Golden Palace. They landed at Rangoon, took Prome and were permitted to advance, for the King, with motives of piety and regard to life, made no preparations whatever to oppose them. The strangers spent vast sums of money in their enterprise and they soon exhausted their resources and were in great distress. They then petitioned the King, who, in his clemency, sent them large sums of money to pay their expenses back, and ordered them out of the country.

From a Burmese Chronicle.

WHEN Clive was carving out an empire in India there arose in the country now called Burma a great conqueror, King Alompra the Hunter. His invincible armies swept into Assam, Siam, Southern China and the Irrawaddy delta. Here, two miles from the great pagoda of Shwe Dagon, built a thousand years before to enshrine the Sacred Hairs of the Buddha, Alompra founded a city which he called Rangoon, 'the end of war.' His successors proved themselves no less redoubtable in the field and in the palace ; the most powerful of the line, the conqueror of many provinces and the father of 122 children, died in 1819 at the age of seventy-eight.

Unchallenged in their supremacy, the Kings of Ava* lived in complacent isolation, contemptuous of the activities of the outer world. They gave themselves

* Ava, the old capital, is a few miles north of Mandalay.

the most impressive titles : Lord of the White Elephant, Lord of the Golden Umbrella, Lord of the Earth and Air ; indeed, so superb was his status that the King of Ava was usually referred to impersonally as 'The Golden Feet.' The trade of the few Europeans who had established factories in the delta languished in the face of a government which despised the white man as a being of inferior status. By the end of the eighteenth century communication between the Court at Ava and the rest of the world was confined to the contradictory reports of a few envoys, who were treated with contempt and sent out of the kingdom as soon as possible, and one or two heroic missionaries. "There are no English families in Rangoon, and there is not a female in all Burma with whom I can converse," complained Mrs. Judson, the wife of the Baptist missionary at Rangoon. Those few Europeans who succeeded in reaching Ava brought back news of gilded palaces, a proud and war-like people, and an insolent self-complacency bred of isolation.

Men who had beaten the Manipuris and the Assamese had no fear of the British. After a marauding expedition had routed a frontier force at Chittagong, it was proposed to lay claim to Dacca and the country round Calcutta. One courtier had indeed the temerity to suggest that the English might gather a force of two hundred thousand sepoy to defend themselves. The Golden Feet told the man not to be a fool, and ordered his army to advance into Bengal. The frontier was crossed in January, 1824.

Though there was no imperialist sentiment at home to support them, officials in India were by no means averse to a war with the Kingdom of Ava.

Lord Amherst knew of its imperialist pretensions and the Honourable Company was anxious to claim the teak forests, the ideal material for shipbuilding because it withstood the effects of sea water and did not splinter under gunfire. The plan was to hold the invaders in check on the north-east frontier, while an expedition landed at Rangoon to advance up the river to Ava. It was to be an amphibious expedition, and in order that ships could move up the river at a season when the greatest volume of water might be expected, it was decided to strike at once at a time when the rains were about to begin. In March, 1824, war was declared, and it was hoped that the whole campaign would be over before the end of the summer.

On March 26th the *Larne* sloop of war, Captain Frederick Marryat, anchored in Madras Roads.

He had been appointed to this ship the previous spring. She was the smallest of three Blackwall frigates, *Liffey*, *Tees* and *Larne*, built in 1812. A fir built ship, mounting 20 guns and costing £12,247, the *Larne* was commissioned with the other ships to the East Indies station. On July 3rd, after receiving on board thirteen smugglers to make up his complement, Marryat sailed from Portsmouth.

At Falmouth an amusing episode occurred. As the captain, together with a little midshipman and an old bumboat woman, were pulling out to the ship their gig capsized. The woman could swim like a fish, although she looked more like a derelict balloon with her skirts floating out around her. She made straight for Marryat.

“Go to the boy ! Go to the boy—he can’t swim !”

“Go to the boy ! What ! I hold up a midshipman

when I can save the life of a captain? Not I indeed!" And she took him firmly by the collar.

The voyage out was uneventful. He had his wife on board, together with their son Willy, aged five. It was a happy voyage. Only on one occasion, when his wife was on shore, is any official punishment recorded in the log. Presumably the sentences had been outstanding for some time, the captain being unwilling to go through with the barbarous business while his family were on board. "December 24th. Colombo Roads. Ed. Masterman (seaman) punished with 48 lashes for Desertion and Drunkenness"; four others were given 36 lashes each; another received 48 for theft; and two more were given a dozen apiece for neglect of duty.

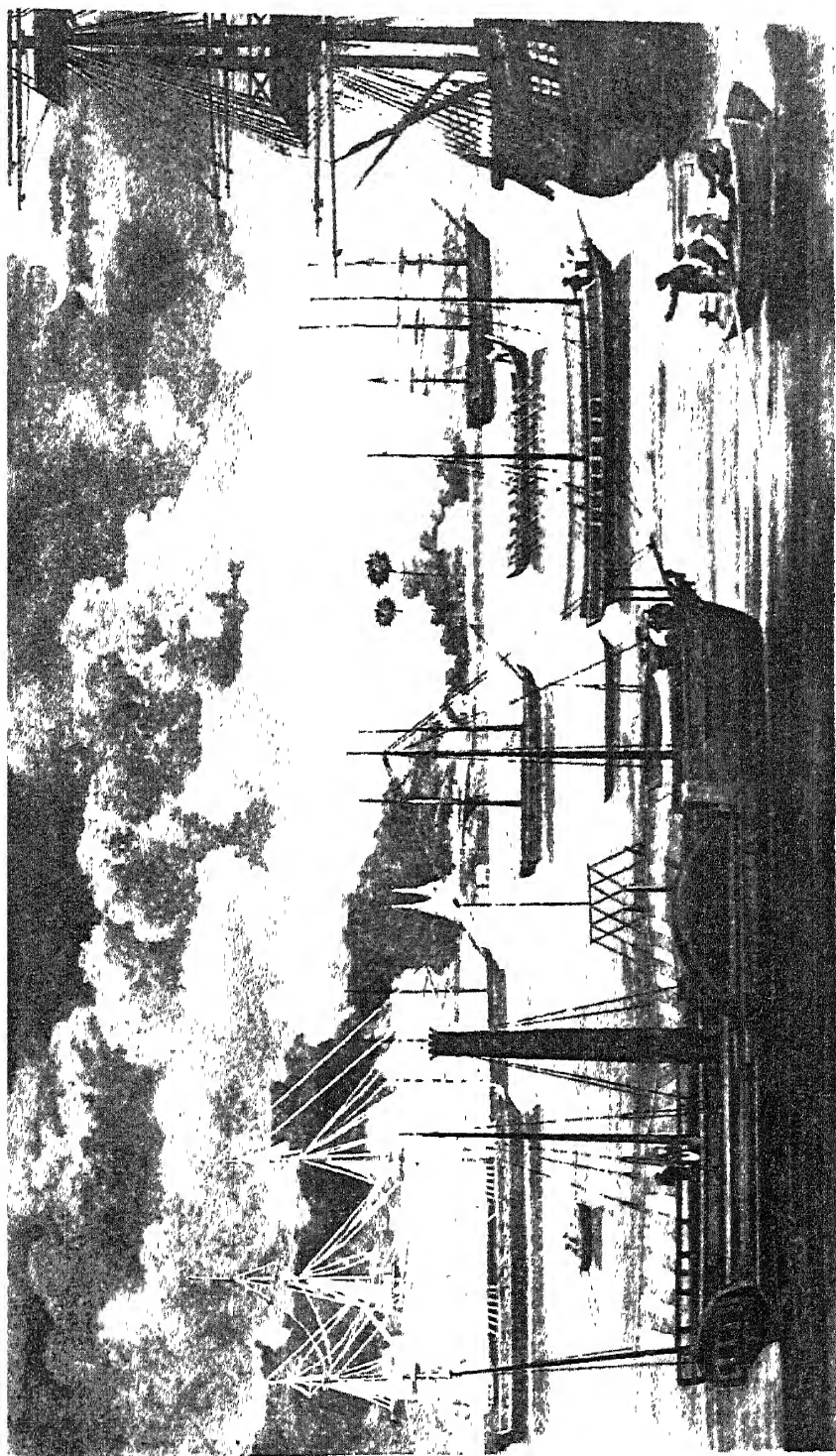
The commander-in-chief of the East Indies station was Commodore Grant, who flew his flag in the *Liffey*, the largest of the new frigates. As soon as news reached Madras that an expedition was intended against the Kingdom of Ava, he sent the *Larne* up to Calcutta. Marryat left the regimental mess in a fever of excitement. Every night bloodthirsty subalterns gave the toast of "Prizes and Promotion: a short war and a bloody one." They knew that the Madras troops would get most of the fighting, because the Bengal sepoy refused to cross the sea.

Leaving his wife and child at Madras, Marryat anchored in Kegeree Roads on April 2nd. Here he took on board the commander-in-chief of the expedition, Sir Archibald Campbell, a stout-hearted Peninsular veteran who made up in courage what he lacked in intelligence. A week later the *Larne* sailed south with the transports to the rendezvous at Port Cornwallis.

They reached that beautiful land-locked harbour in the Andamans at the end of the month. On May 2nd the Madras armament joined them there. The united armada consisted of no less than 63 sail and some 9,000 troops, of which half were European. The naval force consisted of the *Liffey* (50 guns), four 20 gun sloops, four of the Honourable Company's cruisers, and a host of schooners, gun brigs and transports. Marryat regarded the Bombay Marine (as the Company's fleet was called) as "a useless and incompetent service," which should be immediately superseded by a regular naval force. There was nothing wrong with the officers, but the ships and crews (chiefly Portuguese and Lascars) were thoroughly inefficient. The vessels were smaller than 10-gun naval brigs like the *Beaver*, but heavily overarmed and quite unfit for warlike service.

Amongst that crowd of vessels there was one curiosity of the greatest interest—"the Hon'ble Company's steam vessel *Diana*." She was included on the expedition at the express wish of Marryat himself. Others thought her a dangerous innovation, for she was the first steamer ever seen in the east and the first ever utilised in war by the Navy.* But Marryat saw that a paddle steamer with a 60 h.p. engine, armed with swivel guns, and drawing only five feet of water, would be invaluable for navigation up forest rivers where a sailing vessel would inevitably be becalmed. As for fuel,

* The first steamers to be employed by the Navy were the tugs *Comet* and *Monkey* in 1821. They were employed in home ports on the sort of service illustrated in Turner's 'Fighting Temeraire.' The *Diana* was launched at Kidderpore in 1823. Though designed for service in the Hoogli, she proved herself thoroughly seaworthy and ran for eight years without the necessity of any major repairs. Describing the launch, the Calcutta *John Bull* says: "She sits well on the water, and is a great ornament to the river. We hail her as the harbinger of her kind who will waft us to our native shore with speed and pleasure."



THE ATTACK ON DALA, SHOWING THE *DANA* STEAM VESSEL.

that could easily be obtained from the banks. Circumstances proved the wisdom of his judgment. The *Diana* puffed ahead of the force all the way up to Ava, belching smoke out of her drain pipe funnel which was as tall as her masts, and thrashing up the water with her fussy little paddles in the most awe-inspiring manner. The very sight of her created more consternation than a herd of armed elephants. As she rounded the bends of the river, even the most stout-hearted of the Burmese were seen to throw themselves in consternation out of their war canoes and strike out desperately for the shore.

The choice of the *Diana* was the only intelligent thing about the planning of this expedition. The rainy season was chosen to facilitate inland navigation. But monsoon weather is as hot as it is wet. More unsuitable clothing for fighting in tropical swamps than red coats and black shakos cannot be imagined. No land transport of any kind was available ; supplies were ludicrously inadequate ; and medical equipment was of the most elementary type. As the Irrawaddy delta had been conquered by an alien state, Campbell felt convinced that the British would be welcomed as the emancipators of an enslaved people. The country would provide everything necessary for the well being of 9,000 troops. All the British would have to do would be to sail up to Ava, a voyage which he estimated would take about six weeks. In actual fact the first Burmese War lasted nearly three years and employed over four thousand troops.

How fatuous was this optimism was apparent even at Port Cornwallis. It was a cheerful, sociable fleet. Military bands played all day long, and after the evening gun had been fired, army officers shouted their witticisms from ship to ship with the aid of speaking

trumpets. But there was no drinking water. Grant was already a sick man, so it was left to Marryat to remedy this elementary deficiency. Campbell reports in his first despatch that the difficulty of obtaining water "was very speedily removed by Captain Marryat, whose indefatigable exertions in collecting and appropriating the scanty supply which the land springs afforded, and distributing a proportion from such vessels as were well supplied to those in need, enabled him, on the following day, to report the fleet ready to put to sea."

On May 10th the fleet anchored within the bar of the Rangoon river, one of the hundred channels of the Irrawaddy delta. The *Larne* led the column up the river next morning, under a Bengali pilot who deserted at the first opportunity, but not before he had run the ship aground, where she remained until the next high water. The river ran between paddy fields and jungle swamps, intersected by innumerable creeks. On the night of their arrival flaming beacons flashed the news of the unsuspected invasion to the 'wungyi' in command at Rangoon. Twenty miles from the open sea, the *Larne* rounded a bend of the river and came in sight of the town

As the leading ships took up their position opposite the King's Wharf there was an expectant pause. Marryat ordered the sails to be furled, and drums beat to quarters. Suddenly, about two in the afternoon, there was a crackle of musketry from the palisade along the water front. The *Liffey* and *Larne* replied with a concerted broadside. Another pause ensued, while the boats, laden with redcoats, began to creep out from among the ships. But the enemy guns were silenced. The

troops landed without firing a shot. In twenty minutes Rangoon was in the hands of the British.

They found the town completely deserted. On the approach of the fleet the Burmese commander had jumped into the saddle and bolted for the jungle. The only human beings left in the town were fifteen missionaries locked up in a warehouse.

Advance parties pushed up along the two roads converging at the towering golden spire of the Shwe Dagon pagoda, dominating the landscape from the eminence on which it was built. A company of foot marched up in gallant style, colours flying and drums beating. They forced the bronze doors at the top of the steps and entered the shadowy interior with bayonets fixed. The temple was deserted ; only an immense statue of the seated Buddha smiled down enigmatically upon these rude invaders. Thrusting the colours into the folded arms of the image, the soldiers ran back into the sunlight to fortify the place against attack.

As soon as the disembarcation had been completed Marryat rowed ashore to see the town. He found it a network of dirty streets enclosed by a bamboo palisade sixteen feet high. Except for a few brick buildings along the water front, the houses were mere bamboo huts, raised a few feet above the ground to allow the tide and the scavenging herds of swine to clear away the refuse. The only paved roads were the avenues, lined with miniature pagodas, which led out to the Shwe Dagon. At every corner he could see the richly gilded spire of that inverted trumpet flashing in the sun. "A haughty hill of devil worship," Havelock called it, when he billeted his Highlanders in the innermost sanctuary.

Although they had captured the town without striking a blow, it was soon obvious that the British were in an unpleasant situation. A belt of high grass, mango and palmyra trees surrounded the town; behind, loomed an impenetrable wall of jungle. The rains had broken and a steamy heat rose from the surrounding swamps. The flight of the inhabitants denied the invaders those supplies which they had ardently expected. Instead of a flourishing city with bazaars selling meat and fruit and vegetables, they found nothing but an "assemblage of wooden huts," several herds of swine, any number of pi-dogs and clouds of mosquitoes. No wonder the troops got out of hand the first night. Somebody discovered a cellar full of brandy, and by nightfall there was hardly a British soldier who was not incapably drunk.

The chaotic organisation of the expedition was evident as soon as an attempt was made to land supplies. The skippers of the transports and supply ships regarded themselves as independent agents. Each one gave his orders as he wished; transport masters quarrelled with quarter masters; soldiers tried to lord it over sailors; and the crews of the brigs refused to carry out the orders of the naval command. They had been hired, they said, "only to pull and not to fight." Exasperated beyond the limits of endurance, Marryat abandoned all responsibility for any ship save his own. However, at Campbell's request, he at length agreed to restore discipline in the marine force, since Grant appeared to be incapable of doing so. After a few days' grumbling the merchant skippers submitted, and even the lascars agreed to man the guns if it should prove necessary.

Most of the accounts of this war are by soldiers who

do scant justice to the part played by the Navy or to the character of their enemies. Only in Marryat's *Diary on the Continent* is it possible to find an acute and sympathetic account of Burma in 1824. He had the highest opinions of the people—industrious, handsome and polite, he calls them. They made excellent soldiers, and they exhibited extraordinary courage and skill in their amphibious methods of warfare. Their intelligence and inventiveness amazed him. "I never met with any Burmah who could not read and write. . . . They are the most even tempered race I ever met with, always gay, always content under any privation. . . . The English seamen are particularly partial to them, and declared they were 'the best sort of chaps they had ever fallen in with.'" He makes it clear that it was only the superiority of British weapons which defeated them: "when we consider with what weapons they defended themselves, it is not a little to their credit that they held out for nearly three years against the power of Great Britain."

The King of Ava was not in the least disconcerted at the news of this "invading army of rebellious strangers." The climate and the proved quality of his troops would deal effectively with such insolence. Gifted with extreme mobility, huge forces could be moved from one part of the jungle to another in an amazingly short space of time, each soldier with a fortnight's rice in a bag slung over his shoulder. The Burmese were the first to discover the art of entrenchment. Every native carried an entrenching tool, and with astonishing speed a thousand holes could be dug, each large enough to hold two soldiers, a bag of rice and a flask of water. Apart from swords and spears and

light guns called 'jingals,' which they fired from platforms constructed between the branches of trees, antiquated muskets were all the weapons they had. "We used to consider it a very courageous act to venture to fire off a Burmese musket," says Marryat; "every man makes his own gunpowder. . . . The consequences are that when the muskets go off (and it is ten to one they do not), it is again ten to one that the bullet falls short, from the inefficacy of the powder."

In the construction of stockades the Burmese showed outstanding ability. At every point the British had to storm these formidable erections at the point of the bayonet. Inside a high palisade ran a platform on which were mounted light cannon. Through gun embrasures and loop holes the storming party was brought under a concentrated fire. "Their stockades are usually built of thick teak timber, or rather squared trees, which are much too strong to be penetrated by any other than battering cannon, and, in consequence, were invariably carried by escalade. Some of them are built of bamboos, running from a foot to two feet in diameter. These are equally strong, with the peculiarity that if you fire cannon at them the bamboos yield, admit the shot, and then close again. If these stockades are not close to the river side, they usually have a deep ditch round them, and are further protected by what was more serious to us than the escalading, which were abbatis of pointed bamboos stuck in a slanting direction in the ground. The slight wounds made by these bamboos brought on lock-jaw, and too often terminated fatally."

A few nights after the capture of Rangoon he discovered that the enemy was no less adept at warfare

upon the water. In the middle of the night a blazing raft, constructed of forty canoes loaded with jars of petroleum, was floated down upon the British ships as they lay at anchor. "It blazed as high as our maintop, throwing out flames, heat and stink quite enough to drive anyone away." With poles and boat-hooks the raft was pushed clear of the ships' sides; but until Marryat could construct a strong protective boom, the British were in danger of being stranded at Rangoon without transport to carry them away. The size of the Burmese war canoes was astounding. There is an excellent picture of one of these huge boats in the volume of drawings illustrating the war, in the production of which he collaborated with a certain Lieutenant Moore. "Very splendid craft," he calls them, "pulling from eighty to one hundred oars; the Burmahs manage them very dexterously, and will pull them from seven to eight miles an hour. . . . The gun mounted on the boat's bow is of little effect, but their spears are really formidable."

Campbell's first aim was to clear the surrounding country of the bands which harassed his base night and day. The next few months saw a series of minor encounters of this nature, carried out under the most fatiguing conditions. Every few days a column set out to capture some stronghold hidden in the jungle. Wading across swamps, often hauling light guns with them, the sweating, rain-soaked troops would come across a stockade in the depth of the forest. After a ten mile scramble, those brave men advanced to storm a palisade at the point of the bayonet. At first they were even unprovided with scaling ladders; lifting their comrades on to their shoulders, they pulled

and heaved each other over the top. And when they had captured the fort it was only to find that their elusive foe had slipped away from them once more.

The sailors had an even worse time than the soldiers, for they had to pull as well as fight. Every day the *Larne's* boats were lowered and, with a light gun in the bows, they rowed up river in support of the land columns. At the end of May Grant withdrew to Penang, where he died in July. Marryat was left in charge, a heavy responsibility for a junior captain (a commander, as we should say) aged 32, who was suffering from recurrent bouts of malaria. Throughout that summer we must imagine him encouraging his men as they pulled up stream, leading them in person as they leaped ashore to bridge a creek or lay their guns on the enemy's defences. At other times, when he lay shivering with fever in his bunk, he was forced to delegate his authority to capable lieutenants like Fraser or Ryves ; but not before he himself had arranged what boats were to be sent and how they were to be placed for the attack. Here is a typical entry from the log of the *Larne* : " May 29. A party of 34 men under the Captain and 2nd lieutenant and midshipman went away in the Steam Boat on Service with a division of the Army. Fired a salute of guns being the anniversary of King Charles' restoration. Heavy rain. May 30. Captain and party returned p.m."

No less than four separate attacks were necessary to capture the stockades at Kemmendine and Pagoda Point, the King's war boat station four miles from Rangoon. The column sent on May 19 attempted to storm the fort without scaling ladders. As they retreated through the trees to the river they came under the

fire of their own ships. Campbell's despatch of June 1st shows how serious the situation had become :

Every act of the enemy evinces a most marked determination of carrying hostility to the very last extremity ; approaching our posts night and day, under cover of an impervious and uncombustible jungle, constructing stockades and redoubts on every road and pathway, even within musket shot of our sentries ; and, from their hidden fastnesses, carrying on a most barbarous and harassing warfare ; firing upon our sentries at all hours of the night, and lurking on the outskirts of the jungle, for the purpose of carrying off any unlucky wretch whom chance may throw in their way.

On July 8th, a final attack was launched against the stockades near Kemmendine. Three columns of troops made their way over land, while a flotilla of gunboats and pinnaces sailed up the river in support. A loud and continuous yelling from inside the main stockade convinced the British that at last they could lay hands on their elusive foe. After a terrific bombardment the *Larne* hoisted the signal 'Breach practicable.' The troops stormed the palisade, to find only one person inside—an old woman who was too crippled to escape.

On this occasion Marryat had stayed behind in bed with fever, having deputed Fraser to command the naval force. Replying to Campbell's report on this success, the Governor wrote from Calcutta :

The Governor General in Council unites with you in regretting that the severe indisposition of Captain Marryat, the senior naval officer, prevented his witnessing the successful result of his judicious arrangements on the occasion alluded to. You will be pleased to assure Captain Marryat that his Lordship in Council entertains the highest sense of his valuable services.

The story of these attacks was repeated elsewhere. Every position had to be captured and recaptured

two or three times before the enemy finally retreated out of reach into the jungle. Meanwhile Rangoon was scourged by every tropical disease known to man. Dysentery, malaria, scurvy, dropsy, ulcerated legs and gangrenous wounds carried off scores of men every day. Cholera swept through the camp as a result of water polluted by corpses washed from the graves by tropical downpours. There was no milk, no meat, no fish, no vegetables ; nothing but salt pork and biscuits, together with unripe pineapples and limes gathered in the countryside. A random extract from the log of the *Larne* shows how desperate the situation had become :

June 12th.—George Paine, captain's coxwain, died of cholera.

June 13th.—General attack of cholera and fever. John Adams died.

June 17th.—James Gurney, Master, died ; John Brown died.

June 20th.—Joseph Evrington died.

June 22nd.—William Stanley died.

A letter from Marryat to Grant, who was himself on the point of death, describes the condition of his ship at the beginning of July :

I must now call your attention of H.M.S. Larne, whose crew I am sorry to say have been rendered quite inefficient by disease. Since we have been on this expedition we have had 170 cases of cholera and dysentery. We have had 13 deaths—we have now 30 patients at the hospital on shore, and 20 in the sick list on board ; our convalescents are as ineffective as if they were in their hammocks ; they relapse daily, and the surgeon reports that, unless the vessel can be sent to cruise for a month, there is little chance of their ultimate recovery. When I sent away the expedition under Lieutenant Fraser on the 7th instant, I could only muster three officers and twelve men fit for duty.

On his own initiative he took the *Larne* down river from July 13th to 27th, until his crew were somewhat recruited by the fresher air of the sea.

On August 4th it was decided to attack the old Portuguese fort at Syriam, four miles east of Rangoon on the opposite bank of the river. Marryat commanded the naval contingent of two pinnaces and the *Tom Tough* bomb ketch ; the troops consisted of 600 sepoys and Europeans.

Leaving the main river they made their way up a narrow creek overhung with trees. A few hundred yards up they caught sight of the derelict fort, overgrown with creepers and almost invisible as it stood a short way back from the bank. The troops were disembarked and the van of the column began to hack their way through the jungle. They had gone but a short distance when an impassable ditch opened at their feet. While they stood searching in vain for a place to cross, a galling fire opened from the walls of the fort. Marryat and his sailors had just landed in the rear of the column when they heard a cry of "Sailors !" from the van. To the horror of the infantrymen, the Captain responded with the command "Throw away your muskets and follow me !" Cutlass in hand, he led his men at the double past the waiting troops. Branches were cut down and a passable bridge constructed. With a cheer the soldiers dashed across and carried the fort by storm.

As they gained the further wall dusky figures could be seen retreating in the direction of Syriam pagoda, four miles distant. They had hardly time to regain their breath when the bugle sounded and the order to march was given. Arrived in front of the pagoda there was nothing for it but to charge up the stairs. The defenders were dislodged after a stiff fight, and as they retreated into the jungle Marryat's seamen seized hold of the

sepoys' muskets and cheerfully fired volley after volley with their weapons pointing at an angle of 45 degrees. Needless to say the Burmese vanished once more without serious loss.

The last of the attacks in which Marryat was personally concerned was that made a few days later upon Dala, the site of the present iron works opposite Rangoon. A force of about 900 men embarked at the King's Wharf in flat bottomed boats manned by lascars. As they approached the new stockade they were met with well directed musketry fire. The lascars promptly refused to row another stroke, and even began to throw out anchors, though they were well within the range of the enemy's fire. Heavy losses were sustained until Marryat's boat led the way to a point above the stockade, where a landing was made in mud "which was remarkably stiff and thigh deep." Troops and sailors scrambled up the bank, shouting enthusiastically and firing wildly in all directions.

The capture of the stockade entailed a loss of 76 men. "I am sorry that our list of killed and wounded is so heavy," writes Marryat in his despatch, "but it will be accounted for when I state that in all these attacks the lascars who man the boats will not pull into the fire unless they are led by the officers and seamen of H.M. ship *Larne*. The conduct of Mr. Maw, midshipman of the *Liffey*, has, during the whole of his service here, been a series of gallantry."

Marryat led another attack up the creek on September 2nd, when thirty canoes and a large amount of ammunition was captured. But a few days later the *Kitty* brig, which was lying far up the creek, was attacked by war canoes. When Marryat appeared in response to the

signal for assistance he found that the enemy had been beaten off. "The spears remaining in the sides of the gun brig, the ladders attached to her rigging, and the boarding netting cut through in many places, proved the severe conflict which had been sustained."

Meanwhile scurvy had debilitated the crew of the *Larne* to such an extent that on September 9th, Marryat was forced to ask permission to return to Penang to recuperate his ship's company

"Under these circumstances," replied the Commander-in-Chief, "I most fully coincide with you in opinion that no time should be lost in proceeding to Penang where those comforts essentially necessary for the recovery of your crew are at present most conveniently to be had; aware as I am that the most urgent necessity alone induces you to suggest the removal of the ship under your command. I feel fully convinced that you will not lose a moment in returning to partake of the further, and I trust more active, operations of the approaching campaign. In taking I hope a very short leave of yourself, and the officers and men of the *Larne*, I shall not dwell on the valuable and ready aid I have invariably received from you all, embracing duties of perhaps as severe and harassing a nature as ever were experienced by either sailors or soldiers, and under privations of the most trying nature."

Indeed the situation had grown perilously like those disastrous expeditions to the West Indies which were so frequent during the previous century. Only 1,500 Europeans were fit for service. By the end of the year 3,115 out of the original force of 3,586 white men who had embarked on the expedition were dead. One officer

in three had been carried off by disease. "Never," says the historian of the British Army, "has the British officer been subjected to more long continual hardships, privations, and discomfort than in this campaign."

A letter written to his brother from Penang shows to what a state the Captain and the ship's company of the *Larne* had been reduced—

My dear Sam,—The Larne, with the remnants of a fine ship's company, is at last removed from the scene of action, where perhaps, in the course of five months, they have undergone a severity of service almost unequalled. I should still have been there, but the men had been on salt provisions since February last, and the scurvy broke out and made such ravages that it was impossible to stay longer without sacrificing the remaining men. . . . I have gained credit in the business, as the despatches of the commander-in-chief fully prove. . . . But I do not think that I could have lasted much longer. I am not ill, but my head is so shattered with the fever which I have had that it swims at the least exertion, and I am obliged to lay my pen down every four or five lines. I have also a touch of the liver. I do not know whether the Admiralty will publish my despatches, but being no favourite there, probably not ; but I think, after having had the command of a fleet of one hundred and twenty sail ; after having succeeded in everything, and with the small number of men allowed to a sloop of war, having done the duty of at least three or four frigates, that they must give me my promotion, (i.e., to Post-Captain).

Before the end of November the health of his men had improved to such an extent that he could sail his ship, even though she was 'in rags,' to Calcutta. Before returning to Rangoon he took on board the following supplies : Bread 16,020 lbs., in 267 bags ; flour 2,250 lbs. ; suet 270 lbs. ; raisins 627 lbs. ; tobacco 757 lbs. ; lime juice 490 lbs. in four boxes ; sugar 1,460 lbs. ; tea 327 lbs ; vinegar 53 gallons ; water 20 tons.

On December 24th the *Larne* anchored again in the Rangoon river. Marryat found that the situation had improved during his absence. Supplies of food

and troops had arrived from India, amongst whom was Henry Havelock's regiment, nicknamed 'the Saints' because they neither swore nor drank. The inhabitants, too, had begun to return to the town, where the bazaar trade was now flourishing. A successful expedition had conquered the coastal provinces to the south-east. The position of the British in the delta was now reasonably secure. But no advance had been made in the direction of Ava, and enormous forces were reported to be concentrating at Danubyu, a town about thirty miles to the north.

With the arrival of these forces under a commander called Bandoola, the war entered on a new phase. Bandoola's strategy, like that of the Russians in 1812, was to lure the British into the jungle and then cut them off from their base. Campbell was not dismayed. If he could defeat Bandoola and reach the town of Prome before the rains began, he would be half-way to Ava. For the first time since his arrival he was able to plan a campaign, instead of frittering away his force in securing his base. Three columns were to advance north against Bandoola : he himself would lead a land force of 2,500 men to a point north of Danubyu ; Brigadier Cotton would command a marine force to sail up and attack Bandoola's stronghold ; meanwhile a third force would cut off his retreat by capturing Bassein, a large town west of Danubyu. To reach Bassein this force would have to go by the open sea to the mouth of the Bassein river and then advance some 80 miles up to the town itself. Major Sale was appointed to command the troops, and Captain Marryat commanded the ships.

After some delay Danubyu fell on April 2nd. Bandoola

was killed during the final assault by a rocket fired from the ships. Cotton and Campbell's united forces pressed on to Prome, driving the disorganised Burmese before them through the jungle.

The Bassein expedition was equally successful. Having taken 780 men on board the *Larne*, *Mercury* and *Argyle* (two of the Company's ships) and three other transports, Marryat gave the order for his little fleet to weigh on February 19th. After a rough sea passage, during which most of the troops were sick, they made the mouth of the Bassein river, one of the three navigable rivers into the interior. Their appearance at this part of the delta was a complete surprise and they found that the stockades built to defend the entrance of the river were but thinly manned. "Our progress was therefore easy ; after a few broadsides, we landed and spiked the guns, and then, with a fair wind, ran about seventy miles up one of the most picturesque rivers I was ever in." All the way up they passed deserted stockades, the inhabitants having fled into the jungle, leaving only a troop of shrieking monkeys to accompany their triumphal advance.

Though the ships frequently went aground, the campaign was altogether too simple for Major Sale's taste, who began to grumble as soon as they had passed the first outposts. "There was no pleasing Sale," writes Marryat ; "if he was in a hard action and not wounded, he grumbled ; if he received a slight wound, he grumbled because it was not a severe one ; if a severe one, he grumbled because he was not able to fight the next day. . . . But notwithstanding this mania for being carved, he was an excellent and judicious officer."

Bassein was one of the principal towns in the delta,

the site of an old factory established by British merchants in the seventeenth century. Marryat expected a stiff resistance, but the town fell without a blow.

The inhabitants, on hearing of the enemy's approach, had split into two factions, one anxious to defend the town, the other eager to take refuge with Bandoolla's army. "This difference of opinion had ended in their setting fire to the town and immense magazines of grain, dismantling the stockades, and the major part of the inhabitants flying into the country. The consequence was that we took possession of the smoking ruins without opposition."

Sale continued on a fruitless chase of those who had fled north, while Marryat remained at Bassein to persuade the neighbouring chiefs to submit. He was soon on excellent terms with the chief of the town, whose "little daughter, about eight years old, was very fond of coming to see me, as I generally made her little presents. She became very attached to me, but she never appeared without a wax candle (the token of submission), which she dropped at my feet before she threw herself into my lap."

The wungyi of Ngaputaw, a town they had passed on their way up the river, was the only chief who refused to submit. He was 'a gold chatta chief,' one who was entitled to have a gold umbrella held over his head whenever he appeared in public. Marryat decided to take the *Larne* down the river to see what could be done about this important personage.

On March 26th, he anchored in front of the town, thirty miles south of Bassein. The guns were run out, and the Captain was on the point of giving the order to open fire, when a canoe carrying the chief was seen

to put out for the ship. The wungyi came on board and made his submission in such a dutiful manner that Marryat presented him with a little brass cannon. To show his delight the chief honoured the Captain with the title of Great War Dog.

Hearing that some guns had been sunk in a creek a few miles away, Marryat sent the ship's boat in search of the place. They rowed up the wrong inlet and failed to find the guns. Thereupon the chief obliged with some of his men to guide Marryat to the place.

On his return Marryat found an invitation to a Nautch to be given in his honour. The banquet was to be held after dark, and he was apprehensive lest anything should happen at such a feast. However he accepted on behalf of himself and his officers, provided that he was allowed to bring what he called his 'official attendants' with him—a party of six marines. They were told to conceal bayonets up their trouser legs, and the first lieutenant, who was left in charge of the ship, was given orders to open fire the moment he saw a pistol flash.

Having taken these precautions, Marryat rowed ashore to where his host was waiting. "The chief took me by the hand and led me up to his house, in front of which had been erected a sort of covered circus, brilliantly lighted up with oil in coco-nut shells, and round which were squatted several hundred Burmahs. He took us all to the raised verandah of the house, where we found his wife and all his attendants, but not his daughter, who was said to be very handsome. As soon as we had taken our seats the Nautch commenced. About twenty men struck up a very barbarous kind of music, in which the bells and drums

made the most noise. After a few minutes of discordant sound, the play began. . . . The play ended very curiously ; after the prince had gained the princess, they had a procession, in which they made an imitation of a ship, out of compliment to us. . . . In the meantime pickled tea (which is a great compliment and excessively nasty) was handed round to us, and we all partook of it, taking it out with our fingers ; but we could not swallow it, so it remained like a quid of tobacco in our cheeks until we had an opportunity of getting rid of it.

“ The purser had had the foresight to put a couple of bottles of wine, and one of brandy, in the pockets of the marines, which were now produced, while the band continued to play, and wrestling was introduced. . . . In the meantime the chief's daughter, who did not come out to us, was very anxious to know what sort of people we were, and she sent for one to be brought in to her. My clerk was the favoured party. She examined him very closely, pulled his dress about, made him bare his legs to see how white they were, and then dismissed him. The clerk reported her as very handsome, and quite as white as he was. . . . We stayed about two hours longer, and then we rose to go away. The chief walked with us down to the boats, and we were not sorry to find ourselves on board again ; for the population was much more numerous than we had imagined, and had any treachery been attempted we must have fallen a sacrifice.”

Two other chiefs, who lived near the mouth of the river, still held out. When Marryat informed the wungyi of this he was offered the loan of eight war canoes. He accepted joyfully, promising to pay the Burmese the same as he paid his own men. The next

day they set off down stream, the war canoes moving through the water at an astonishing speed, preceded by three fast scouting canoes, their paddles flashing in the sunlight. The Burmese on board the *Larne* climbed like monkeys all over the rigging and proved themselves expert shots with the marines' muskets. The mere sight of this curious armada was enough to make the recalcitrant chiefs submit. Having destroyed their stockades, Marryat sailed up the river again to take off that part of Sale's force which had not marched over land to join Campbell.

On April 14th, a few days after his return to Rangoon, Marryat exchanged into the *Tees*, which had just arrived from Madras. She was in every way a better ship than the *Larne*, though of the same fir-built class—a 26 gun sloop with a complement of 130 men. The command of this ship, together with his record as Grant's successor at Rangoon, fully entitled him to immediate promotion to the rank of Post-Captain. In this, however, he was for the moment disappointed.

On May 16th, 1825, the *Tees* sailed for Madras. Marryat left Captain Chads in command during the closing stages of the war. Chads accompanied Campbell's force all the way up the Irrawaddy, until they were within striking distance of Ava. Describing the progress of the expedition that summer, an army officer writes : " We appeared to traverse a vast wilderness from which mankind had fled ; and our little camp of 2,000 men seemed but a speck in the desolate and dreary waste that surrounded it." It needed many months of fighting, and even a threat to sack the capital itself, before the Lord of the Golden Feet could be brought to terms. By the treaty finally signed in February,

1826, the King yielded his claim to Assam, ceded some outlying provinces such as Arakan and Tenasserim, and agreed to pay one crore of rupees by way of indemnity. The Honourable Company gained a valuable teak concession ; but only five Europeans remained at Rangoon. It was not till after the Second Burmese War in 1852 that the whole of the Irrawaddy valley came under British rule.

CHAPTER XIV

THE LAST COMMAND

I should like very much to have engraved on my coffin, 'Many Years Commissioner,' or 'Lord of the Admiralty,' or 'Governor of Greenwich Hospital,' or, in fact, anything but 'Captain' for, though acknowledged to be a good travelling name, it is a very insignificant title at the end of our journey.

Marryat. *The King's Own.*

MARRYAT returned home from Burma with a grievance. The death of Commodore Grant had created a vacancy in the Post-Captain list to which his successor in command of the naval forces at Rangoon should have been appointed immediately. For some inexplicable reason Marryat's promotion to the rank of full Captain was delayed until the following summer, a delay which seriously prejudiced his opportunities for advancement in the service.

Soon after he had paid off the *Tees* on January 11th, 1826, he sent the Admiralty a memorandum of his services. A quotation from this document shows how the grievance rankled :

I have been considerably more than 100 times personally engaged with the enemy, and I have been twice wounded.

During the time I held the command at the opening of the Burmah war, I was 14 times thanked by the Governor in Council and mentioned in public despatches. I was then made into a death vacancy dated May, 1824—but was not confirmed to it, my commission bearing date July, 1825—by which 26 officers were put over my head.

If it can be proved that in any one instance an officer who had done his duty in time of war was not confirmed to a death vacancy occurring during the war, I waive my claim, but otherwise I consider I was hardly treated.

Marryat was certainly a vain and ambitious man, but he had good reason to be proud of his services. The honour of Companion of the Bath, 3rd class, which was accorded him in recognition of his services in Burma, did little to assuage his wounded pride. The Order had been extended in 1815 to include officers with distinguished active-service records. It included 72 Knights Grand Crosses and 180 Knights Commanders. The third class of mere Companions was not a particularly distinguished honour, but it enabled him to add a gilt war canoe, over which was written the word 'Ava,' and a representation of the Royal Humane Society's gold medal, to his family arms.

In the summer of 1826 he held an exhibition of Burmese curiosities at the rooms of the Royal Asiatic Society. An illustrated description of the treasures he had brought home in the *Tees* is given in the unpublished diary of Mrs. Skinner, an intelligent archæologist. The outstanding exhibit was a statue of the King of Ava, encrusted with gold and rubies, which Marryat had taken from one of the pagodas, and which he later presented to the Ethnological Museum at Leyden. The rest of the collection, including a number of precious stones cut from the corpses of the Burmese warriors called the Invulnerables, who used to insert them under the flesh, was transferred to his mother's house at Wimbledon. To the exasperation of his children, little remained at his death on account of the reckless manner in which the Captain gave away his treasures.

Soon after his return his favourite son Willy, aged six, died of an internal complaint. He and his mother had come home in the *Tees*, and in *The King's Own* there

is a tender picture of the little boy as his father remembered him on board the ship : “ He was dressed in imitation of a man-of-war’s man—loose trousers, tightened at the hips—and a white duck frock, with long sleeves and blue collar—while a knife, attached to a lanyard, was suspended round his neck ; a light narrow-brimmed straw hat on his head completed his attire.” The internal inflammation from which he suffered caused an unquenchable thirst. A few days before his death his pious mother was expatiating on the joys of Heaven. Raising himself on his elbow, the sick boy interrupted her with a pitiful cry : “ Mother, I don’t want to go there ; I want some beer ! ”

At this time the Marryats were living at Brighton. The Captain and his wife were frequently invited to ‘ swarrys ’ at the Royal Pavilion. The Captain was fishing for a patron. He had presented the Duke of Sussex with a Burmese boy, and he had bought from him Sussex House, Hammersmith, after letting his old town residence, 5 Cleveland Row, to Theodore Hook, the famous wit, who was one of Marryat’s closest friends. Dancing attendance on royalty was a pastime which soon palled on an active intelligent man in the prime of life. He disliked the “ meanness, the dishonesty and servility ” he saw at Court. Neither George IV nor William IV, (in spite of his early career in the Navy) had much respect for naval officers, still less for one who wished to abolish the Press Gang. “ Damn them ! ” the latter exploded after one of his numerous failures to design a new uniform, “ Dress them how you will, you cannot make them look like gentlemen ! ” This dislike was reciprocated in naval circles. At that date naval opinion was predominantly Whig, so much so that the addition

of the crown to the old foul anchor in the naval crest was resented by many as an insult. Though William came to admire *Peter Simple*, and the Duke of Sussex became for a short time the patron of its author, Marryat remained anything but a courtier. "The navy," he wrote towards the end of his life, "never has been popular at Court. Each succession of the House of Hanover has been hailed by its members with fresh hopes of a change in their favour, which hopes have ended in disappointment ; but perhaps it is as well."

It was under these unsatisfactory conditions of enforced leisure that Marryat wrote his first novel. *The Naval Officer, or Scenes and Adventures in the Life of Frank Mildmay* was published anonymously in March, 1829.* It is a novel of particular interest to the biographer, for if ever there was an autobiographical first novel, this is one. It describes the adventures of Marryat himself up to the year 1821. No one can say when it was begun ; but most of it was certainly written at Brighton in 1827 and 1828. It was, he says, "written hastily, and before it was completed we were appointed to a ship. We cared much about our ship, and little about our book. The first was diligently taken care of by ourselves, the second was left in the hands of others, to get on how it could. Like most bantlings put out to nurse, it did not get on very well." His complaints in 1833 of 'the confounded licking' he received at the hands of the reviewers shows that it took some time for his pride to recover from yet another blow. The *Edinburgh*, for instance, dismissed it in these terms : "We are sorry to be obliged to say that it is marked

* The use of the term 'Naval Officer' is interesting. Hitherto it had usually applied to civilians employed by the Navy Board. For some time to come old-fashioned officers continued to call themselves 'Sea Officers.'

by many violations of taste and propriety." From that day to this critics have complained that the book "leaves a bad taste," or that it describes life in the old Navy "as more brutal than it was."

Certainly it cannot be called a good novel. The hero is about as unpleasant a young man as anyone can conceive; and since Marryat, in *Percival Keene*, repeats the mistake of making his central character a cad, it is doubtful if he ever appreciated this error in taste. Like his master, Smollett, Marryat writes a coarse, uneven, untidy picaresque story. In all his early books he flounders like an amphibian as soon as he embarks on scenes ashore. Yet with all its faults *Frank Mildmay* is, by reason of its vivid realism, the best thing that Marryat wrote until he found his true vein in *Peter Simple* five years later.

What we would deny is the charge that the book is not a true picture of life in the navy between 1806 and 1821. The characters may be drawn too much in black and white; but the episodes are such exact accounts of scenes in the author's own life that it would be ridiculous to deny the substantial accuracy of the picture. Popular literature about the sea has suffered in recent times from being too highly romanticised. Hence modern readers of such books as *Roderick Random* and *Frank Mildmay* are too apt to accuse their authors of injustice, and even of 'disloyalty.'

Prejudice there undoubtedly is in Marryat's first novel, but prejudice in characterisation, not in description of conditions. Marryat wrote the book in a discontented frame of mind. He admitted he was sowing his wild oats and paying off "those who had ill treated me." But it is in no sense an extravagantly prejudiced

production like another anonymous story, published that same year, entitled *The Life of A Midshipman*, intended to correct an injudicious predilection in boys for the life of a sailor. Marryat gives credit where credit is due. He is as willing as anyone to agree that great changes for the better had been made since the epoch of Trafalgar ; and he was justified in claiming that his books were in a small measure responsible for those changes. In *Midshipman Easy* he declares that he set out with a reforming aim : “ We do not write these novels to amuse—we have always had it in our view to instruct, and it must not be supposed that we have no other end in view than to make the reader laugh. We have selected this light and trifling species of writing, as it is by many denominated, as a channel through which we may convey wholesome advice in a palatable shape. . . . To prove that we are correct in asserting we have done good, we will, out of several, state one single case,” and he instances the introduction of a regulation requiring that 24 hours must elapse between the giving of a punishment and its being carried out as due to a story in *The King’s Own*. “ We had the pleasure of knowing from the first lord of the Admiralty of the time that it was in consequence of the suggestion in the novel.”

Unfortunately *Frank Mildmay*, far from improving conditions in the service, only served to harm its author’s reputation. The mistake he made was to draw his characters too close to life. It was singularly inept to suppose that the coincidence between the career and even the initials of his hero and of himself would escape notice in naval circles. A number of people in the service must have taken offence at the parts they played

in the story. It is a pity that both he and his friend Chamier, whose *Life of a Sailor* (1832) covers almost exactly the same period, should have chosen to write novels instead of straight autobiographies. There are so few good personal accounts of the navy during the post-Trafalgar period that we can ill afford the absence of two such excellent writers from the list.

Marryat received £400 for his first novel. It says much for the perspicacity of his publisher, Henry Colburn, that he should be given so much encouragement at the start. But good novels were rare in 1829, and Colburn had a reputation for picking winners. This bustling little man published most of the early Victorian best sellers; he paid his authors generously; and he was the first to advertise on an extensive scale. As the inventor of the 'blurb' and the sponsor of fashionable 'silver fork' fiction he incurred the execrations of the swashbuckling critics of *Fraser's Magazine*—"it is he who has not only invented, but brought the present art and mystery of puff manufacture to its existing condition." Because he was a Colburnite Marryat never became a Fraserian, though many of his friends belonged to that brilliant circle.

A naval novel was something new at that date. Nothing had been done in that line since Smollett, if we except the sketches of Marryat's friend Glascock, and the *Post Captain, or the Wooden Walls Well Manned* (1805) by John Davis, a trivial little book too liberally besprinkled with sailor's slang. Colburn had the publisher's gift of anticipating the taste of the public. He realised that he had found in Marryat a promising writer with any amount of original material. Indeed, there is enough excitement in *Frank Mildmay* to stuff

out a dozen novels. In 1833 Marryat thought of re-writing the book : " The *Naval Officer*, when corrected, will be so improved that he may be permitted to stand on the same shelf with *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*." Success had gone to his head. He never revised the book ; but he did utilise the same material in *Peter Simple* and *Midshipman Easy*, books which are, in their way, as good as Jane Austen's worst.

The appointment which brought *Frank Mildmay* to a hasty conclusion was to the command of the *Ariadne* (28 guns) on November 10th, 1828. A letter written the next month shows the Captain down at Plymouth, fitting out his ship and revising his novel for the press. Writing to somebody in Colburn's publishing house, he asks him to send down the two last volumes " as I have long evenings here without wife and children to distract my attention." He claims to have improved the first volume " very much and made better English of it."

He had some difficulty collecting a crew. It was customary for a captain to choose his Number One, but when Marryat applied for the officer he wanted the Admiralty sent him a certain Lieutenant Pitts, of whose capabilities he had the smallest opinion. At the same time the Duke of Sussex asked him to take the Hon. Tom Keppel—" a very fine lad "—as a supernumerary midshipman. A hanger-on from the *Tees*, suffering from lumbago, insisted on coming on board as the captain's cook ; Marryat only got rid of him by paying his coach fare home. The carpenter was discharged later as a confirmed thief, and the master-at-arms for

improper conduct. Frederick, the captain's ten-year-old son, was entered as Boy Second Class, and promoted in December to Volunteer First Class. As this directly contravened a recent circular, his father was officially rapped over the knuckles on his return.

Before the ship sailed he presented his other son, Frank, aged three, to the Port Admiral. Frank had just been put into sailor suits. The Admiral patted his curly head.

"Well, you're a fine little fellow."

"And you're a fine old cock too!" piped Frank.

The *Ariadne* sailed on June 6th. The captain's instructions were to discover a submerged rock which had been reported somewhat to the west of Ireland. He reached the appointed spot on June 11th. The log states: "Sounded with 180 fathoms of line. No soundings." After a fruitless search the ship returned to Plymouth on July 17th, her captain describing the cruise as "a six weeks' cruise to discover a rock in the Atlantic, which never existed except in the terrified or intoxicated noddle of some master of a merchant vessel."

Marryat had not wasted his time during that cruise. While in command of the *Ariadne* he completed his second novel, *The King's Own*. This book differs from its predecessor in that, except for the description of Willy already quoted and some details drawn from his experience with smugglers in the Channel, it is almost entirely fictitious. In writing *Frank Mildmay* he had only to draw on the limitless resources of the memory of adventurous years. Now he tried, in the space of nine months, to write a real novel. The result is a verbose, haphazard book, but with a few

good episodes, notably a vivid description of the great naval Mutiny and a stirring account of a shipwreck. There are many interesting digressions describing the anguish the author suffered as he tried to spin a three-decker novel out of his imagination. Here is one of his self-portraits :

I am seated in the after cabin of a vessel endowed with as liberal a share of motion as any in his Majesty's service ; whilst I write I am holding on by the table, my legs entwined in the lashings underneath, and I can barely manage to keep my position before my manuscript. The sea is high, the gale fresh, the sky dirty, and threatening a continuance of what our transatlantic descendants would term a pretty—considerable—tarnation—strong blast of wind. . . . I have just been summoned from my task in consequence of one of the battens which secured my little library having given way to the immoderate weight of learning that pressed upon it.

And he picks up *The Wealth of Nations*, *Don Juan* and *The Anatomy of Melancholy* from the wash on the floor. Surely an eccentric naval officer to have such reading matter in his cabin, and to be writing a novel !

Two hundred pages later the end is in sight.

"Congratulate me, reader, that notwithstanding I have been beating against wind and tide, that is to say, writing this book through all the rolling and pitching, headache and indisposition, incident to the confined and unnatural life of a sailor, I have arrived at my last chapter."

In another novel he describes his jubilation at concluding the last page when within two days' sail of the Lizard. Alone in his cabin, he bursts into song.

"Three bells, sir," cried the first lieutenant, who had opened my door unperceived by me, and showed evident surprise at my motions ; "shall I beat to quarters ?"

"Certainly, Mr. B. (Pitts)," replied I, and he disappeared. But this interruption proved only a temporary cessation. I was in the height of the 'Cavalier Seul' when his head popped into the cabin—

"All present and sober, sir," reported he, with a demure smile.

"Except the captain, I presume you are thinking?" replied I.

"Oh! no, indeed, sir; I observed that you were very merry."

"I am, Mr. B., but not with wine; mine is a sort of intellectual intoxication not provided for in the Articles of War."

"A what, sir?"

"Oh! something that you'll never get drunk upon, as you never look into a book. Beat a retreat!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

On August 7th, 1829, the *Ariadne* was ordered to sea again, this time to the Azores. A complicated situation existed there. Portugal and her colonies were in the throes of one of those liberal revolutions so heartily detested by nineteenth century reactionaries. King Pedro IV had abdicated after drawing up a Charter of Liberties which gave the nation the semblance of a liberal constitution. The seven-year-old Donna Maria de Gloria succeeded him. The absolutist party supported her, while the handsome young Regent, Don Miguel, won the favour of the constitutionalists, the army and the populace by his supposedly liberal views. Having exiled Donna Maria and got himself crowned King with the support of the army, Miguel proceeded to tear up the Charter and extirpate his rivals, whether liberals or royalists.

By the time the *Ariadne* sailed, Miguel's position was secure in Portugal. But at Angra in the island of Terceira a garrison still held out for Donna Maria. The Miguelists blockaded the port and a British man-of-war stood by to protect the interests of her nationals. The *Ariadne* arrived on August 19th to take over this duty, just after an attempt on the part of the Miguelists to effect a landing had been beaten off.

Marryat's despatch of September 11th describes the situation as tranquil. The Miguelists were humbled by their defeat, and their rivals, "behaving with much

prudence and moderation," were confident of winning over the other islands. Meanwhile he himself was maintaining a strictly neutral attitude.

On receipt of this news the First Lord sent orders for the recall of the ship. But Marryat had already anticipated these instructions by setting sail for Madeira. An appreciation of the situation there, which was forwarded by him in December, shows shrewd sense and strong Whig sympathies. The Miguelist soldiery, who were getting out of hand, had disturbed the island.

Their Lordships are aware that these are the same Regiments who have assisted at all the revolutions and changes which have lately agitated Portugal. Hitherto they have been the tools of others, but they now seem to be aware of their own importance and are assuming a position not dissimilar to that of the legions in the decadence of the Roman Empire or the Janissaries of later days. . . . Should they throw off all control, the English, from their known wealth and being foreigners, would be the first to suffer. . . . If I may hazard an opinion from my constant communication with the Portuguese during the last five months, I should say that they are perfectly indifferent as to the point whether Don Miguel or Donna Maria are [*sic*] seated on the throne. . . . It is the Constitution which they require, and I do not think that Portugal will ever be in a settled state until it is obtained. The torch of Liberty has been lighted and although it may be smothered for a time the flame will reappear ; like the Greek fire, it must be permitted to burn out, for it cannot be extinguished.

The same despatch describes the heavy weather they encountered on November 23rd. "The same night that we anchored at Madeira, we were forced to slip, and for eight days the weather was tremendous, the sails were blown out of the bolt ropes and the ship thrown on her beam ends. On the 30th November the *Ariadne* regained the anchorage with her last anchor down—no flour—no biscuit, and but one ton of water on board. She has suffered very much from the stress

of weather and will require a general caulking and lifting of the rigging."

Midshipman Keppel* says that all hands had given themselves up for lost at one moment; they kicked off their shoes and scrambled up into the rigging, until Marryat was able to save his ship. Now the most exciting part of *The King's Own* is the wreck of the *Aspasia* in the concluding chapters. It has been suggested that this November gale served Marryat for copy; but as he states that the novel was finished on the first cruise of the *Ariadne* that cannot be the case. As a matter of fact he is here writing up an incident which occurred in 1797, when Lord Exmouth (then Captain Pellew) in the *Indefatigable* frigate drove the *Droits de l'Homme* line-of-battle ship on to the rocks in Audierne Bay.

On her way to Madeira the *Ariadne* called at St. Michael, the southernmost of the Azores. There her captain learned that a fine American schooner, the *Samuel Smith*, "hermaphrodite rigged of 180 tons burthen," had been run on shore in a sandy cove. She had sprung a leak after striking a wreck, and since there were no carpenters on the island capable of repairing her, her master had decided to put the vessel and her stores up for auction. When Marryat saw the schooner he "was surprised at the beauty of her model. . . . Aware that the Navy Board were purchasing vessels of this description for Tenders, and thinking that even as a model she was valuable, I repaired to the

* There is a tradition in the Keppel family that Tom was the original of Midshipman Easy. There is nothing to support this beyond the fact that he once fought a triangular duel like the one described in the book. See *The Times*, Sept. 10th, 1936. The early cruises of the *Impérieuse* certainly supplied most of the material for that book. The name Easy was probably taken from Davis's novel, *The Post Captain*.

Schooner, taking with me the 1st Lieutenant, Carpenter, and Carpenter's Mate of the *Ariadne* to assist me in my survey, before I would decide upon the purchase." He found the vessel in prime condition, with every cedar and live oak timber as sound as when she was launched, except that the false keel had been knocked off. The only difficulty was to float her over the reef. As soon as he had done this successfully, Marryat called for volunteers to sail her home. A prize crew was put on board, the vessel provisioned for five weeks, and the officer in charge provided with the necessary charts and instruments.

However, on their way to Madeira the two ships parted company in the November gale. Marryat sailed for England, hoping to find that his purchase had reached home first. But the *Samuel Smith* had disappeared for ever. Whether she foundered in the gale, or whether, as it was rumoured, she turned pirate and slaver in the West Indies, no one could ever say.

Marryat was in a quandary. He had purchased the schooner on his own initiative ; he was responsible for the money and for the lives of the men he had put on board her. Relatives soon appeared at Plymouth with their complaints. A certain Mr. Rowe and his wife pestered the Captain for compensation for their son's death. They followed him about in the streets, abused him within the hearing of passers-by, and assaulted his servant. "Had he not been rescued," says Marryat, they "would probably have killed him—as it is, he is now suffering from the injuries received."

The Navy Board then held an enquiry, and on March 8th, 1830, Marryat wrote a detailed account of the whole unfortunate business.

I am aware that my proceedings may be considered irregular, yet I trust their Lordships will allow that in devoting my time day and night to the repair of the vessel, and risking a considerable sum, I could have been actuated by no other motive than a zeal for the Service. I can most conscientiously assert so, although it may have been to a certain degree alloyed by a feeling of vanity, in attempting what even my own Officers considered to be impracticable.

It was not enough for the Board that the Captain should eat humble pie. All the officers concerned were interrogated. This infuriated Marryat, because it implied "a doubt of the correctness of my statements (which, I must be permitted to say, is to me the most painful circumstance which has occurred during the whole transaction)." Endorsing this protest on March 13th their Lordships stated they were "at a loss to understand" what the captain meant by such a statement; "and their Lordships further consider that Captain Marryat was not justified in purchasing the vessel in question and placing in her the men of the *Ariadne*, not having been desired or authorized to do so either by the N.B. or the Admty."

It was at this time that Marryat began seriously to consider the possibility of retirement from the service. For years past he had been out of favour with the Admiralty. His Press pamphlet, and the unpleasant revelations in *Frank Mildmay*, had done his reputation considerable harm in official circles. He resented the way in which his services in Burma had been rewarded. Chances of further promotion were small enough in peace time, with the list congested with senior captains, and the prospect of his ever finding another ship was now seriously prejudiced by the outcome of the *Samuel Smith* affair. He saw that the possibilities of providing for his growing family by literary earnings were con-

siderably brighter than by continuing to keep his name on the active list.

The immediate success of *The King's Own*, which was published on April 15th, 1830, proved to his own satisfaction that he had another shot in his locker. The reviews contrasted it favourably with its predecessor. Harrison Ainsworth, writing to a friend, thought it the only good book that season. "*The King's Own* is excellent, excepting always the catastrophe, which is forced, unnatural and revolting ; but there are some spirited scenes, much acute remark and much caricature sketching. It will amuse you." Captain Chamier thought it "the very best naval novel ever penned." And Washington Irving, then at the height of his reputation, answered an invitation to stay on August 25th with a letter which may well have decided the matter of Marryat's future career for him : "I hope you are busy with your pen, and that you intend to show up some of the old wreckers and rovers of the ocean. You have a glorious field before you, and one in which you cannot have many competitors, as so very few write the author to the sailor. I think the chivalry of the ocean quite a new region of fiction and romance, and to my taste one of the most captivating that could be explored."

Marryat's financial position in 1830 seemed to warrant his resignation from active service. Like every sailor, he was a spendthrift ; but he had inherited a good proportion of his father's legacy of £250,000 in 1824, and his Uncle Samuel's of £180,000 in 1828. In 1830, he had, over a bottle of champagne, exchanged Sussex House for an estate of a thousand acres at Langham, a few miles from Nelson's birthplace in

Norfolk. He determined to let the farms to good tenants and himself win fame and fortune as a novelist in London.

But he did not intend to send in his resignation immediately. In the autumn of 1830 he went down to Devonport to take over the command of the *Adriadne* from the hands of an acting captain. On September 28th he wrote to Colburn's reader: "I am again ready for sea and waiting for orders and I shall be very glad to receive them as I am so unsettled at present that I cannot do much. When once I am completely miserable, i.e. at sea, I shall work hard that I may forget my unfortunate situation. I have made a few memorandums for the Aera of Nelson but have not as yet commenced serious operations, indeed I am puzzled between the variety of works which I have commenced upon which to finish. I therefore go on adding up matter for *Peter Simple* one day, for the present work which I intend to call *Newton Forster* and for the Biography (of Collingwood) before mentioned*. . . . I have not the least idea where I am going, but I hope to Lisbon or in that quarter—as when I come back I shall resign the command and come on shore most probably for an indefinite period and then I shall get on a little faster."

According to his daughter, what finally decided him to throw up his command was the news of his appointment as gentleman-in-waiting to the Duke of Sussex. This, however, is not the reason he gives when sending in his resignation to Sir Manley Dixon, the Port Admiral, on October 6th:

* The Nelson and Collingwood books were never finished. *Newton Forster* appeared in 1831, and *Peter Simple*, which made him famous, began serial publication in the *Metropolitan Magazine* in June 1832.

THE LAST COMMAND

Sir,—You will be pleased to inform the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that on resuming the command of H.M. Ship Ariadne I had anticipated that my private affairs would no longer require my presence. Since my rejoining the Ship, I find that in consequence of the death of both my father's executors I am likely to sustain a great loss of property, if I do not remain in England, to attend to my interests.

I have therefore to request that you will move their Lordships to allow me to resign the command of H.M. Ship Ariadne and at the same time to express my readiness to be re-employed, as soon as my private arrangements will permit.

I have the honour to be, Sir, etc.,

F. MARRYAT, Captain.

The sequel to this letter is a fitting testimony to Marryat's excellence as a naval officer. When the ship's company heard that their captain had resigned there were so many applications for discharge that the Port Admiral was instructed to inquire into the matter. He replied: "My opinion is that the crew of the *Ariadne* have been actuated to the above state of insubordination from their preference to Captain Marryat."

After having had the satisfaction of seeing his son Frederick re-appointed as First Class Volunteer, Marryat's career as a naval officer terminates with the following letter to the Secretary of the Admiralty on November 11th, 1830:

Sir,—Having been paid off at Devonport in His Majesty's Ship Ariadne on the 8th instant I beg you will be pleased to solicit the Right Honourable Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to direct the insertion of my name in the Half Pay List from that date.

I have the honour to be, etc.,

F. MARRYAT, Captain, Royal Navy.

CHAPTER XV

THE NOVELIST

MARRYAT was thirty-eight years old when he retired from the navy. A short, sturdily built man, of uncommon muscular strength and somewhat rough in his manner to strangers. Simpson's portrait shows an intelligent, open face. A magnificent head of hair and a preference for remaining clean shaven (in spite of the difficulties of shaving twice a day with a cleft chin) made him look younger than he really was. But when in old age he grew a beard and his hair, which he wore almost down to his shoulders, began to turn grey, he had an almost patriarchal air. Unevenly placed eyebrows gave his face a look of inquiry, which was sharpened by the glint of his deep set grey eyes. Anyone who took the trouble to notice the amused line of his mouth could appreciate the wit which he displayed in congenial company ; but the portrait reproduced as the frontispiece to this volume is that of a handsome man of action and one accustomed to command : the mouth is resolutely set, giving an impression of the courage and, at the same time, of the passionate temper which he possessed.

Overmuch reading and writing in later years resulted in failing eyesight. For duck shooting, of which he was inordinately fond, he devised a curious crystal monocle which he attached in some mysterious way to the brim

of his hat. For work indoors he wore the narrow pair of spectacles with thick lenses which were later presented to the library of Dartmouth College. As he grew older his handwriting became so minute that it was said that there was only one compositor in London who could read his manuscripts.

His quick temper was the cause of a number of rather disgraceful quarrels. He was naturally vain, and his success as a novelist went to his head ; the result was that he dealt with anyone who offended him in an unduly truculent manner. But his faults, says one who knew him well, " proceeded from an over-active mind, which could never be quiet—morning, noon or night. If he had no one to love, he quarrelled for want of something better to do ; he planned for himself and for everybody, and changed his mind ten times a day." He was always bursting with enthusiasm for some new story or some hare-brained scheme to 'improve' his property—schemes for making money out of a duck decoy, draining marshes, constructing salt pans—always to the detriment of his bank balance. He even produced an elaborate plan, so typical of the retired officer, for facilitating the sorting of letters, which he submitted to Rowland Hill. The sea had made him restless. He was never content with one place or one mode of life for long. Now he was a novelist, now a farmer, now yearning for the sea again ; at one time he was on the point of buying a castle in Hungary, at another he thought of camping in the desert for a year or two.

A rash temper, and the knowledge that he possessed a rich mine of experience which could be exploited in the form of fiction, enabled him to sail undaunted into the dangerous waters of the life of a professional novelist.

For a man to change his trade in the middle of life as suddenly as Marryat did argues a large amount of self-confidence. But he was a man of tough fibre, and he was not in the least apprehensive of the reception he might meet at the hands of Doctor 'Maginn-and-water' and his crowd of Fraserian swashbucklers. Nor did the successful dandies and ladies of fashion, Bulwer Lytton and Lady Morgan, who had captured the novel market with their 'silver fork' brand of fiction, have any fears for one who in 1831 knew that he had the material and the money too.

The success of *Newton Forster*, which had been running in the new *Metropolitan Magazine*, opened the doors of literary London. There was no reason why he should remain a gentleman-in-waiting to the Duke of Sussex. His first scheme was to found a Nautical Magazine which would rival the *United Services Journal*, "no favourite with naval men." The project fell through. So when, in 1832, he bought the *Metropolitan Magazine* he determined to give it a distinctly naval character. Howard, the friend of his boyhood and an ex-naval officer, was appointed sub-editor, and men like Chamier and Glascock were the most regular contributors. The magazine had suffered so badly from the incapacities of old Thomas Campbell, the author of *Ye Mariners of England*, who had been a friend of Joseph Marryat, that it had been reduced almost to bankruptcy when Captain Marryat took it over. The curse of bad editorship clung to it. It was never a real success after it had changed hands, and Marryat was glad to get rid of it in 1836.

In the use Marryat made of it, as the vehicle for the serial publication of his own novels, he was responsible

for an important innovation in publishing which had serious effects on the architecture of the Victorian novel. Most of the great novels of the last century were published in this way. Ainsworth was the first to follow Marryat's example in publishing his own work in his own magazine ; Dickens and Thackeray followed in *Household Words* and the *Cornhill*. This mode of publication paid the author twice over, but it encouraged a naturally long-winded generation to be unnecessarily verbose. The longer the novel, the more numbers it filled in the author's magazine. Novels became episodic in character at the expense of a well knit plot, and with careless writers almost anything might happen to the characters. It is possible to find a minor personage up and doing half a dozen chapters after he has been laid in earth. But the method suited Marryat. He was never good at a plot. He preferred to write up an episode at top pressure and then wait till the printers became clamorous for next month's copy.

On account of the enormous popularity its editor soon achieved, the *Metropolitan* sold pretty well for a few years. It never had the authoritative note of those extinct volcanoes, the old Quarterlies ; nor did it print such brilliant journalism as could be found in the pages of *Fraser's*. But by Marryat's own public it was bought as eagerly as were the instalments of *The Pickwick Papers*. When *Japhet in search of a Father* was running in its pages an American vessel hailed an English merchantman in mid-Atlantic with the signal " Has Japhet found his father yet ? "

Marryat made his name with *Peter Simple*, which ran in the *Metropolitan* from June, 1832, to December, 1833. Everyone from Coleridge to William IV praised

it. It would be easy to find flaws in its construction, especially in the wearisome machinations of the wicked uncle ; and it is hard to forgive Marryat the resurrection of Chucks the boatswain as Count Shucksen. The book has neither the structural merits of *Midshipman Easy*, nor the controlled style of *Poor Jack* ; but it is as full of life as an egg is full of meat. The dramatic quality of the dialogue is as good as anything in Dickens, and no book better illustrated what G. M. Young calls "the strong decency, the vigour, gusto and ebullience of Early Victorian writers." Marryat's style, at its best, is an unpretentious medium admirably adapted to rapid narrative. His characters are successful combinations of the individual and the typical and, except when they flounder on shore, their adventures are always eminently likely. His fun is often too farcical for a modern reader, but the ways of sea-going folk are so notoriously eccentric that there is no need to accuse him of caricaturing Gentleman Chucks, Mrs. Trotter or Captain Hawkins of the *Rattlesnake*. As we have seen, the book is largely based on personal experience ; but it is worth pointing out that Simple's adventures as a prisoner of war are probably derived from Admiral D. H. O'Brien's narrative of his escape from Verdun in 1808, which was first published in the *Naval Chronicle* for 1813. To refresh his memory Marryat must certainly have explored that lumber room of naval history pretty frequently.*

In those days Marryat lived chiefly at London and Brighton. His circle of acquaintance widened as

* A comparison with G. V. Jackson's *Perilous Adventures of a Naval Officer* (published in 1927) shows little to support the family tradition that he was the original of Simple. Commander W. B. Rowbotham shows in *Times Lit. Sup.* May 31st, 1934, that the hurricane in Chapter 47 is based on the account of an actual storm in 1780.



" 'Tis the curse of service that preferment goes by favor & affection." *Albion*

success began to dawn. He soon came to know Harrison Ainsworth (of whose children he was particularly fond), Forster, Dickens, who had just burst upon an enraptured public, Theodore Hook, Rogers and Tom Moore ; Macready, the leading actor of the 'thirties, Cruikshank, Landseer and Clarkson Stanfield, who illustrated many of his novels from sketches by the author, were also among his boon companions. They were an amusing and a talented crowd. Marryat's high spirits were exactly to their taste, and after twenty years of wardroom life he could drink any of them under the table.

It was at Gore House, the home of Lady Blessington and Count D'Orsay, that the most brilliant circle gathered. The guests were exclusively male, for the breath of scandal already tainted the air. Marryat's wife disapproved her husband's visits, his drives in D'Orsay's flashing cabriolet through the Park, his admiration of Lady Blessington's wit and beauty ; but both Lady Blessington and the Count enjoyed the Captain's company. The latter found in him something refreshing after the usual run of literary gents and rival dandies. Lady Blessington, for her part, even used her influence to get employment for him at the Admiralty, but without success. Furthermore, he was useful to her as a well known novelist. To stave off the financial crash which finally ruined her world she used to edit a series of *Annals*, *Keepsakes*, *Books of Beauty*, for fine ladies to keep on their drawing room tables. She bound them ornately in watered silk or tooled morocco, and she made all her guests contribute. Marryat wrote frequently for these 'gorgeous inanities.' In 1836 he says in a letter : " I hope the *Book of Beauty*

goes on well. I know that you and Mrs. Norton and I are the three looked up to to provide for the public taste."

Editing a magazine and writing a novel a year was not enough to occupy his active mind. He decided to stand in the Reform interest for Tower Hamlets. He was not elected, but he had plenty of fun during the campaign. His programme was too exclusively naval to interest landmen who, in peace time, were not interested in the abolition of the Press Gang—the main plank of his platform. Slavery was the question of the hour, a question on which Marryat inherited his father's views. Asked whether he was in favour of abolition, he side-tracked the questioner with some unpalatable truths about industrial slavery at home: "When I look to the factory and find infants working in penury and misery for seventeen hours a day, how can I pass by such a scene and think only of the black slave?" Nor were his views on flogging any more tactful. A heckler wanted to know "if the gallant Captain was opposed to flogging or not?" "Sir," replied Marryat, "you say the answer I gave you is not direct; I will answer you again. If ever you, or one of your sons, should come under my command and deserve punishment, if there be no other effectual mode of conferring it I shall flog you." 'After which Captain Marryat and the chairman left the room together amidst a tumult of united applause and disapprobation.'

Marryat began to write novels for pleasure; before long the decline of sugar prices after the abolition of slavery, and his own natural extravagance, forced him to write for the support of himself and his family. Half-pay at 4s. a day was not the sort of income such a

man could exist on. He made a fortune with his pen, but he spent it recklessly. His daughter estimates his total earnings at £20,000 ; hardly a book sold for under £1,000, and for one worthless piece of journalism he got as much as £1,600. "I do not write for sixteen guineas a sheet now," he writes in 1837, "I let them off for twenty guineas, as I do not wish to run them hard. . . . Times are hard, and I do not wish to break the back of the publishers, although I ride over them roughshod." "I am somewhat warm tempered myself," Otley the publisher told him, "and therefore make allowance for your's, which certainly is warm enough." To which Marryat replied : "Considering your age, you are a little volcano. . . . Your remark as to the money I have received may sound well, mentioned as an isolated fact ; but how does it sound when it is put in juxtaposition with the sums you have received ? "

It is significant that none of the more serious scrapes for which Marryat's ' warm temper ' was responsible are so much as mentioned in his daughter's biography. In 1834 F. D. Maurice, the Christian Socialist, published a novel called *Eustace Conway* in which the villain's name was Captain Marryat. A few weeks later two gentlemen called at his parsonage with a challenge from the Captain. The parson apologised in terms peculiarly galling to a rising best-seller : " Make my compliments to Captain Marryat and express to him my regrets that my cloth forbids my accepting his challenge. I beg, moreover, that he will accept my sincere apologies for the inadvertent use which I have made of his name, which, until to-day, was totally unknown to me."

A few months later there occurred a hitherto unrecorded incident upon which it is impossible to dwell with any

satisfaction. It is the only episode in his career which shows him in a bad light, for it proves that on occasion he could act like a snob and a bully.

In 1831 there appeared an anonymous novel entitled *Cavendish, or the Patrician at Sea*. Marryat found much in it to tickle his vanity. The preface defended *Mildmay* against its critics, and he himself was spoken of as "the witty naval writer, the head of English marine novelists. His was a face I admired much—there was a talented expression that struck me. . . ."

His curiosity was aroused as to the identity of this author, who appeared to be an acquaintance of his. The book had an air of an autobiography; who was the Patrician at sea? He enquired of the publishers and, on "a reiterated pledge of inviolable confidence," learned that the author was a young naval man of twenty called Nelson Neale. Marryat met him and agreed to revise the book for a second edition. In 1833 Neale published, again anonymously, *The Port Admiral*. It was badly received in all quarters, the *Edinburgh*, for instance, calling it "a scandalous production." In the *Metropolitan* Marryat went further, because it "was generally supposed to have been concocted with our pen." He castigated it as "a rascally work" containing "an infamous libel upon one of our most distinguished officers (Troubridge)." Not content with this, he revealed the name of the author.

Neale taxed him mildly with this abuse of confidence, at the same time offering his congratulations on *Peter Simple*. Marryat's reply was in the worst taste. When he had sought Neale's acquaintance he had hoped, he said, to meet a patrician; he found a mere master's

assistant—"you are aware that the situation of master's assistant is never held by anyone who has any pretensions to be a *gentleman*. Had I," he continued with reference to the review, "said it was the production of a rascal, instead of a rascally production, I had said better." Neale replied with a challenge, which Marryat refused on the score that his opponent was not a gentleman. When his second paid a further call on the Captain at his hotel, he was told that the porter would throw him out if he did not leave immediately.

On the afternoon of November 5th, 1834, Marryat was walking along the pavement in front of the National Gallery when Neale and his brother, a clergyman, met him and called on him to stop.

"Well, sir," said Marryat, advancing towards them.

"Keep your distance!" cried the excited young man, raising his walking stick. "You are a liar and a scoundrel and only want the courage to be an assassin!"

Marryat did not reply. He untied his cloak and hung it on the iron palings of the Gallery. As he turned round Neale struck him with his cane. Marryat lunged at him, but the young man stepped quickly aside to keep out of his opponent's reach. As he did so he fell back over a heap of stones piled by the side of the road. The Captain, reports the *Sunday Herald*, "then flung himself upon his assailant, and planting his knees upon his chest, and placing one hand upon his throat, with the other he gave him several blows on the head with a stick." Passers-by rushed to separate the two men. Neale rolled from under Marryat's knee, and having lost his stick, picked up a handful of stones, which he flung at his opponent's head. He then repeated his epithets and a second tussle ensued. Once more the

older man had the best of the struggle. Finally he relented and permitted Neale to get up. The young man had had enough. He picked up his hat, wished Marryat "Good morning," and walked away. Thereupon the Captain, says a bystander, "gave full vent to his wrath and endeavoured to turn the multitude in his favour; but those who had seen the whole affair called out in terms neither flattering to his feelings nor his courage."

Both men later appeared at Bow Street. Captain Glascock endeavoured in vain to effect a reconciliation, so Neale published the whole correspondence as an appendix to his new novel, *Will Watch*.

The next year Marryat was embroiled in yet another affair. At Lady Blessington's he had met an American gossip writer of the name of Willis. In one of the columns which this self-confident young man wrote for the *New York Mirror* he was foolish enough to report that "Captain Marryat's gross trash sells immensely about Wapping and Portsmouth, and brings him five or six hundred the book—but that can scarce be called literature." Shortly afterwards he published these *Pencillings* in book form. He realised that his backstairs gossip would be resented, so he expurgated this and other pleasantries in the English, though not in the American, edition. Marryat saw a copy of the latter in a review. He slaughtered Willis for his abuse of hospitality, adding some uncomplimentary remarks about his birth. Willis demanded an apology, and, when that was refused, published the correspondence in *The Times*. Marryat was furious: "I refuse all explanation," he wrote from abroad, "insist upon immediate satisfaction, and that you forthwith repair to Ostend to

meet me.” The sequel was an angry but bloodless duel fought out in the columns of the press. The duellists did indeed prepare to fight at Chatham, but at the last moment Marryat withdrew his remarks on the advice of his seconds.

Like the fast living people we meet in the pages of Thackeray and Lever, Marryat frequently visited the Continent, probably for financial reasons. His tour in 1835 took him through Belgium to Lausanne, where Kate loved to stay. It was far from a pleasant holiday. The weather was stifling, Kate was expecting another baby, the Captain was acting as nursemaid and writing furiously at the same time. The book was *Midshipman Easy*. Writing in hectic style to Howard from Spa on August 7th he says :

This is Tuesday night—I began Mid. Easy on Friday morning—This is the 12th day and now that I write I have just this moment finished the first 2 volumes (and good ones too) besides writing the Blasé for September.—Record it and Read these two volumes which are the best I ever wrote. . . . Midshipman Easy is my favourite and I shall put him by for a time now and then rattle off the last volume in another six days. I vow that I will [sic] that Book if I live and do well in 18 days. Just to be able to say so. Adieu for the present.

Those who regard Marryat merely as the author of innocuous children’s books may be surprised to learn what a tempestuous character he was when he wrote *Midshipman Easy*. He appears, indeed, to have been even more irascible in temper and profane in speech than the conventional notion of a retired sea captain might suggest. In 1846 Charles Dickens visited Lausanne and met someone who had known the Marryats when they lived there. In a letter to Forster (and it is typical of Forster’s methods as a biographer

that he only prints part of the letter and mentions no names) Dickens tells us enough about the Marryats to explain why their marriage was a failure. We do not know the exact date when the Captain and his wife agreed to part, but it is certain that they did not live together for the last ten years of his life. "Their mutual friend," writes Dickens, "describes himself as having always been in unspeakable agony at table, lest he (Marryat) should forget himself and break out before the ladies." The worst happened when the Captain made the acquaintance of the eighteen-year-old son of an English baronet who "cherished the idea of accomplishing their education into manhood co-existently with such perfect purity and innocence that they were hardly to know their own sex." One evening at dinner the Captain, "as if possessed by a devil, launched out into such frightful and appalling impropriety that years of education in Newgate would have been as nothing compared with their experience of that one afternoon. After turning paler and paler, and more and more stony, the baronet, with a half suppressed cry, rose and fled. But the sons—intent on the ogre—remained instead of following. . . . Poor fellow," continues Dickens, "he seems to have a hard time of it with his wife. She had no interest whatsoever in her children ; and was such a fury, that being dressed to go out for dinner, she would sometimes, on no other provocation than a pin out of its place or some such thing, fall upon the maid she had, beat her till she couldn't stand, then tumble into hysterics, and be carried to bed. He suffered martyrdom with her ; and seems to have been himself, in all good natural, easy-going ways, just what we know him now."

Marryat worked at high pressure in those days. In

December, 1835 he published two short novels, *The Pirate* and *The Three Cutters*; *Japhet* and *Midshipman Easy* appeared in 1836; and *Snarleyyow* was running in his magazine that year. It is not necessary to expatiate upon the merits of *Easy*, though a modern reader may find rather too much horseplay in the fun. Saintsbury used to class it in the front rank of English novels: "a more English book, as far as it goes, I do not know." *Japhet*, Marryat's first land novel, has many admirers; and so has *Snarleyyow, or the Dog Friend*, although its brutal type of humour is sometimes rather revolting. As a historical novel it is a complete failure, but it is undeniably impressive as a horrible grotesque. Indeed it is possible that it influenced a more famous melodrama, *Oliver Twist*, which was written the next year; there is a suspicious resemblance between Smallbones, Nancy Corbett and the arch-villain, Lieut. Vanslyperken, and Oliver, Nancy and Bill Sykes. The best things in it are the songs of Jemmy Ducks, the little shantyman. Marryat never wrote anything better than this, though carronades were not invented till nearly a century after the song was supposed to have been sung—

The captain stood on the carronade—"First lieutenant," says he, "Send all my merry men aft here, for they must list to me; I haven't the gift of the gab, my sons—because I'm bred to the sea, That ship there is a Frenchman, who means to fight with we. Odds blood, hammer and tongs, long as I've been to sea, I've fought 'gainst every odds—but I've gained the victory."

We fought for twenty minutes, when the Frenchman had enough. "I little thought," said he, "that your men were of such stuff." The captain took the Frenchman's sword, a low bow made to he, "I haven't the gift of the gab, Monsieur, but polite I wish to be. Odds bobs, hammer and tongs, long as I've been to sea, I've fought 'gainst every odds—and I've gained the victory."

Our captain sent for us all ; “ my merry men,” said he,
 “ I haven’t the gift of the gab, my lads, but yet I thankful be ;
 You’ve done your duty handsomely, each man stood to his gun,
 If you hadn’t, you villains, as sure as day, I’d have flogged each
 mother’s son.

Odds bobs, hammer and tongs, as long as I’m at sea
 I’ll fight ’gainst every odds—and I’ll gain the victory.”

When Mr. Pickwick was in prison Mr. Weller’s advice was that he should write a book “ about the Merrikins as’ll pay all his expenses and more, if he blows ’em up enough.” Mrs. Trollope and Miss Martineau had just done so with great success, and most English best sellers have followed their example. In 1837 Marryat, in his turn, decided to visit America. If we are to believe him, he started with an aim as serious as de Tocqueville’s : “ I did not sail across the Atlantic to ascertain whether the Americans eat their dinners with two prong iron or three prong silver forks. My object was to examine what were the effects of a democratic form of government and climate upon a people which may still be considered as English.” But the trivial gossip with which he padded out the six hostile volumes he wrote on his return makes us suspect his intentions.

He arrived, as did Martin Chuzzlewit, in the middle of the usual ‘ unprecedented stagnation ’ in business. He was lionised in the capacity of a best seller and his melodrama, *The Ocean Waif, or the Channel Outlaw*, was successfully produced at a Bowery theatre. There were many, however, who suspected that he was just another literary spy who would return to denigrate “ the Palladium of rational liberty at home, sir, and the dread of Foreign oppression abroad.” For the time being his American ancestry on his mother’s side

smoothed things over. MARRYAT A BOSTON BOY, ran the headlines ; and a Saratoga newspaper was "tickled to death" when it discovered that "the gallant Captain was respiring our balmy air."

As soon as he was tired of banquets and receptions he escaped to tour the lakes in a canoe. He finished up at Toronto, and there the trouble began. French Canada was at that moment on the verge of rebellion, which was being fomented by American filibusters operating from the southern shores of the lakes. One of their ships, the *Caroline*, had recently been cut out from under the guns of a fort by Captain Drew ; the crew was taken prisoner and the ship sent over Niagara Falls. It was an exploit upon which Loyalists dwelt with pride, and when Marryat had to make a speech at a St. George's Day banquet he felt justified in paying tribute to it—forgetting for the moment that he had to return to the States. The sequel is described in a letter to his mother :

It was put in the papers, as everything is that I do or say, and a great deal more than I do not do or say ; and they declared that they would lynch me if they got hold of me. . . . I shall not be sorry when I have finished my travels ; but I am resolved that I will see the whole of America before I leave it ; they are terribly afraid of me, and wish me away.

The uproar continued as he made his way south. Having been burnt in effigy at more than one place, he made his peace with a clever speech at Cincinnati, where the good impression was strengthened by Captain Pierce's testimony to his chivalrous conduct when a lieutenant in the *Newcastle*. But for the next twelve months he continued to be pestered with anonymous letters.

In the autumn of 1838 Lower Canada broke into open rebellion. Marryat hastened north again to do his duty with the Loyalist forces. The following letter, written from Montreal after a campaign against the rebels, tells us all we know about his last spell of fighting, as a soldier this time.

I have been with Sir John Colborne, the Commander-in-Chief, and have just now returned from an expedition of five days against St. Eustache and Grand Brulé, which has ended in the total discomfiture of the rebels, and, I may add, the putting down of the insurrection in both provinces. I little thought when I wrote last that I should have had the bullets whizzing about my ears again so soon. It has been a sad scene of sacrilege, murder, burning and destroying. All the fights have been in the churches, and they are now burnt to the ground and strewed with the wasted bodies of the insurgents. War is bad enough, but civil war is dreadful. Thank God it is all over. The winter has set in ; we have been fighting in deep snow, and crossing rivers with ice thick enough to bear the artillery ; we have been always in extremes—at one time our ears and noses frost bitten by the extreme cold, at others roasting amidst the flames of hundred of houses.

For a few months it looked as if war would break out between the United States and Canada. In the hope of seeing more service Marryat sent home the plans of some forts, in case the government might find them useful. The government appreciated the importance of his expert knowledge ; in an unpublished letter we find Lord Glenelg writing to Joseph Marryat from the Colonial Office to arrange an interview with his brother on his return. However things calmed down and Marryat was able to return home via New York in 1839. A letter to his mother written just before he sailed shows that the sea still called him.

Mr. Howard writes me in very bad spirits. He says that I am much injured by remaining away from England, and my popularity is on the wane. I laugh at that ; it is very possible people will be ill natured while

I am not able to defend myself ; but what I have done they cannot take from me, and if I wrote no more, I have written quite enough. If I were not rather in want of money I certainly would not write any more, for I am rather tired of it. I should like to disengage myself from the fraternity of authors, and be known in future only in my profession as a good officer and seaman.

Poor Jack is the only good novel Marryat published in the years immediately following his return from America.* *Percival Keene* repeats most of the errors made in his first book ; in the *Phantom Ship* he tried unsuccessfully to write another book on the Flying Dutchman theme, though Krantz's story of the werewolf is good in its way ; in *Joseph Rushbrook, or The Poacher* he deserted the sea with disastrous results.

Unfortunately this book fell into the hands of E. A. Poe at a moment when the Americans were smarting under the criticisms Marryat had made in his *Diary in America*. Poe wrote a scathing review of it. His later books, says Poe, are "evidently written to order. He has always been a very popular writer in the most rigorous sense of the word. His books are essentially mediocre. His ideas are the common property of the mob, and have been their common property time out of mind. We look through his writings in vain for the slightest indication of originality, for the faintest incentive of thought." *Fraser's* and the *Athenæum* soon joined in the attack. The iron grip of Victorian morality was closing on the nation. A streak of vulgarity was discerned in Marryat's work, and he was accused of being the slave of his publishers. He replied in a long letter to *Fraser's*, defending himself on the grounds

* The best thing in the book is the account of the loss of the *Royal George* in Chapter 19. It is taken almost verbatim from Ingram's contemporary narrative. Marryat is also said to have used the narrative of Schetky, a marine painter, who wrote down the account given him by William Lawrence, one of the survivors.

that at least he provided reading matter for those "who, until lately (and the chief credit of the alteration is due to Mr. Dickens), had hardly an idea of such recreation. . . . If I put good and wholesome food (and, as I trust, sound moral) before the lower classes, they will eventually eschew that which is coarse and disgusting, which is only resorted to because no better is supplied." However his private reactions to such criticism are shown in a sentence from a letter to a friend: "I believe I am a proud sort of person for an author, as I neither dedicate to great men nor give dinners to literary gentlemen, and dogs will snap if they are not well fed."

By 1841 he seems to have realized that he had written himself out as a naval novelist. In that year he set a new course with the publication of *Masterman Ready*. He had been reading *Swiss Family Robinson* with his children and had been scandalised by the ignorance of its author, Wyss, in matters of seamanship and natural history. He determined to forestall a threatened sequel with a book equally adventurous in character, but at the same time meticulously accurate in detail. There were to be no more of those miraculous fruit trees. He soon showed himself to be the best writer of children's books this country has produced. In this type of book he manages to be didactic without being offensive. He writes of real children and really naughty little boys like Tommy. He can write simply without being namby pamby, and without a trace of that condescension which so often mars books addressed to such an audience. The result is that the adult reader can enjoy any one of these books almost as much as he did at the age of ten. Marryat realized that children like being told about the

habits of the Secretary Bird, the Albatross, the Hyaena and the Quagga, and to maintain the high standard of accuracy in detail which he set himself, memories of life in foreign parts stood him in good stead. In *Masterman Ready* he paints the scenery from reminiscences of service in the Indian Ocean. Though he may have taken the name from that of Admiral Sir Masterman Hardy, it can hardly be a coincidence that a seaman called Masterman was punished when he was captain of the *Larne*. The vignettes in the original edition are from his sketches of the stockades round Rangoon.

The year after its publication he retired to Langham for the rest of his life. He was tired of London and literature ; he had quarrelled with his wife and begun a friendship with a certain Mrs. Stewart of Liverpool ; and, as usual, he was "rather in want of money." Frederick and Frank were at sea, the latter having joined the *Britannia*. He was a steadier character than Frederick, who had inherited Jack Easy's taste for outrageous practical jokes ; but, writes his harassed father, "like all midshipmen he turns the house upside down, and very much disturbs the economy and well regulating of a family." His daughters were of an age when they must be taught something. He himself would act as governess ; and at the same time he would see what he could do as a farmer.

"Captain Marryat tried very hard to be a regular farmer," writes his daughter. "He built model cottages and instituted model pigsties ; but both cottagers and pigs proved averse to anything like a progressive movement. He turned his attention to guano, and made himself master of Ben Brace's (his favourite bull) pedigree ; put on gaiters and mounting a rough

thickset pony (called Dumpling) rode about from dyke to ditch, and from ditch to dyke, standing patiently for hours whilst he watched his men drain Fox's Covert or exorcise the will-o'-the-wisp from the Decoy Meadow ; but for all that he was a farmer in theory only, and not in practice."

When he went down to Langham he found the Manor in a terrible state. The estate had shown a steady annual deficit for the past thirteen years. His late tenant had fitted up the drawing room as a doss house for tramps. Birds nested in the boudoir, apparently mistaking Audubon's painted trellis work for the real thing. The Captain soon furnished the house to his own taste. Sixteen clocks were installed, and no end of trouble was taken to make them all strike simultaneously. His sea chest was stowed in the hall. Part of the rockery was converted into the shape of a poop, so that the Captain could pace up and down and fancy himself on his own quarter deck again. And there was always Lieutenant Thomas at the coastguard station six miles away when he got bored with turnips and children.

For the remaining five years of his life his letters are chiefly about the plight of the Norfolk farmer. "I am on my legs from morning to night, for I am my own bailiff and superintend everything myself. I shall have a hard year of it this year, but next year I hope to be out of difficulty." "I have really been so worried that I am glad to fly to any employment which will not allow me to think." The Hungry Forties were indeed a bad time for a naval officer and a novelist to start farming. He made things worse with madcap schemes to 'improve' his property. The Captain's "agricultural vagaries," writes his daughter, "appeared almost like

insanity to those steady plodding minds that could not understand that a man may have genius and no common sense."

As he grew older his love for children grew stronger, a love which lives for us in the tales he wrote during those hard, lonely years. To romp with children was the only pleasure that remained to him. It was this that endeared him to Dickens. Speaking of Dickens's own love of children's parties, Forster writes: "There was no one who approached him on these occasions excepting only our attached friend Captain Marryat, who had a frantic delight in dancing, especially with children, of whom and whose enjoyments he was as fond as it became so thoroughly a good hearted a man to be. His name would have stood first among those I have been recalling, as he was among the first in Dickens's liking." An invitation to a typical Dickensian party has been preserved:

My dear Marryat,—Friday night—Twelfth Night—is the anniversary of my son and heir's birthday; on which occasion I am going to let off a magic lantern and other strong engines. I have asked some children of a larger growth to come and make merry. If you are in town, and will join us as early as half-past seven or so, you will give us very great pleasure.

Faithfully yours always,

CHARLES DICKENS.

It was difficult to maintain London friendships in the days before the railroad penetrated Norfolk. Marryat was constantly asking friends down to shoot—Dickens, Forster, Landseer, Maclise—but they seldom came. On their side they were always asking him up to dine to celebrate some occasion or other, Macready's departure on a tour for America, Dickens's return in 1842.

Only very occasionally was he able to accept. When he did so he made good use of his time—

I saw Lady Morgan to-day ; she is far from well—influenza ; speaks in high terms of you (Mrs. Stewart). Went down to Gore House—nobody at home but little E—. Yesterday dined at the de Bathes' and from thence to a get-up at Dickens' ; very pleasant indeed—lots of fun—Wilson and Parry sung ; children had then a ball and supper, and made speeches, and sung convivial songs ; afterwards, ball and capital supper ; everyone there : Talfourd, Macready, Cruikshank, Landor, Stanfield, Forster, and a hundred more. Left Mrs. G— dancing Sir Roger de Coverley like mad. I dine with Ainsworth to-day.

Meanwhile poverty had driven him to literature again. In 1845 Forster wanted him to do the life of Collingwood he had thought of long before, but Marryat refused. "I have lately taken to a different style of writing, that is, for young people. My former productions, like all novels, have had their day, and for the present at least will sell no more ; but it is not so with juveniles ; they have become an annual demand, and become a *little income* to me." He writes in the same style to Colburn's reader : "I am so inert as to writing that nothing but being obliged to fulfil an engagement will, I fear, make me put my pen to paper again, except in writing little trifles for children, which give me little or no trouble." If Colburn wishes to order a novel in monthly parts he might be able to oblige, "but I fear, except in that way, there is little chance of my sending the public to sleep any more."

All Marryat's books for children are written on the same plan. He saw that Robinson Crusoe provides the ideal formula. In every one of his books his characters are placed in a situation which necessitates a struggle with nature which is described with plenty

of practical advice. They are all shipwrecked mariners or pioneers, and it says much for his powers of invention that he can make the old theme perennially interesting. He lacked the genuine simplicity of Defoe, but Masterman Ready's island would be almost as good as Crusoe's if it was not for that dreadful bore, Mr. Seagrave. In *The Settlers in Canada* (1844) Marryat turned his knowledge of Ontario scenery to good effect ; in *The Mission* (1845) he was not so successful, because he knew little about life in South Africa. The result is a tiresome book, full of scrappy information and a dull religion—

“ Now, have I made myself intelligible, Alexander ? ”

“ Most clearly so.”

The Children of the New Forest is the most readable of all these books. The colour of his life down at Langham is reflected in its pages. The four little girls are his four daughters (the last of whom died in 1932) ; White Billy is Dumpling, and Smoker is Juno, the tiny black greyhound who used to bury her head in her master's lap as he sat writing, until his habit of taking large pinches of snuff made her sneeze with annoyance.

The other books Marryat wrote during his last years are quite worthless. *The Little Savage*, the last of his children's books, was finished after his death by Frank. Ainsworth prevailed on him to return to the sea and write up an actual seaman's log, that of a certain Captain Elsdale. He wanted a good name to start his new magazine, and he was well pleased with the result—“ the log reads capitally. . . . What a wonderful little hand you write ! It is like copperplate, and almost invisible. The compositors ought to have magnifying glasses.” The original log occupies the first three chapters ; the rest, published under the title of *The*

Privateersman, is Marryat's work. About his posthumous novel, *Valerie*, which was finished after his death by a hack in the worst Charles Garvice style, the less said the better.

Towards the end of 1847 the Captain had a final quarrel with the Admiralty which brought on the illness that killed him. He had called on still another attempt to get, if not another command, at least a good service pension of £150 per annum. His request was refused with some unnecessary coolness. As he left the office in a rage he broke a blood vessel, thus precipitating a recurrence of the complaint from which he had suffered during the American War. Soon after, he saw that Captain Chads, who had succeeded him in command at Rangoon, had been given the pension. He told the First Lord that he regarded this as an unfair discrimination against his own claims. "I have applied in vain for employment and have met with a reception which I have not deserved." Lord Auckland replied in the most temperate style: "Your title to such a distinction cannot be doubted, and upon receiving to-day an account of the death of Admiral Nebordean, which has placed one of these pensions at my disposal, I have had great pleasure in naming you to it."

It was too late. Gastric ulcers had developed after the breaking of two small blood vessels. Marryat had taxed his body and his mind harder than most men. He had never spared himself, and the machine which had served him so well was now running down. He was sent to Brighton to recuperate on a diet of sea air and lemonade. It was no use. A few weeks later he returned to Langham with the knowledge, as he told his family, with an "undisturbed and half smiling

countenance," that he could not live more than six months.

The blow which finally struck him down was the news of the death of his eldest son, Frederick, who perished in the loss of the *Avenger* when she struck a reef in the Mediterranean on December 20th, 1847. He was informed that "the last that was seen of your fine son was on deck, upbraiding, in his jocular manner, some people who were frightened, when a sea swept over the ship and took him with it."

Throughout the spring and summer the dying man lay facing the long windows of his favourite room at Langham. Gradually his mind gave way under the strain of the illness and the starvation it entailed. He was, he says in his last letter, "reduced to a little above nothing." His daughters used to bring him bunches of pinks and roses, such as he loved, and he tried to dictate stories to them. But the stories were mostly nonsense, for his mind had begun to wander. He had grown very religious in his old age, and he would pray aloud for hours on end. Then, as he grew delirious, he would hold long imaginary conversations with old friends, Dickens and Bulwer Lytton, even with old shipmates and enemies, Jacky Taylor, Napier and Cobbett. Perhaps he even saluted Lord Cochrane in his dreams.

He died in his sleep just before dawn on August 8th, 1848.

APPENDIX

MARRYAT'S RECORD OF SERVICE

Memorandum of the Services of Captain Frederick Marryat.
(Public Record Office. Adm. 9/5/1565.)

| <i>Rank</i> | <i>Ship</i> | <i>Name of Captain</i> | <i>Station</i> | <i>Date of Entry</i> | <i>Date of Discharge</i> |
|---------------------|---------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Volunteer | Impérieuse | Capt. Lord Cochrane | Coast of France and Mediterranean | 22 Sept. 1806 | 26 Aug. 1807 |
| Midshipman | " | " | | 27 Aug. 1807 | 19 Oct. 1807 |
| Volunteer | " | " | | 20 Oct. 1807 | 7 Feb. 1809 |
| Midshipman | " | " | | 8 Feb. 1809 | 19 Oct. 1809 |
| Able Seaman | Centaur | Capt. Webley | Medit. | 20 Oct. 1809 | 30 Mar. 1810 |
| Midshipman | " | " | | 31 Mar. 1810 | 11 Oct. 1810 |
| Super-numerary | Atlas | Capt. James Sanders | On a passage home | 12 Oct. 1810 | 19 Nov. 1810 |
| " | Namur | Capt. Alex. Shippard | | 1 Dec. 1810 | 15 Jan. 1811 |
| " | Africa | Capt. James Bastard | West Indies | 24 Jan. 1811 | 17 April 1811 |
| " | Chub (Sch.) | Lieut. Nisbet | | 18 April 1811 | 1 May 1811 |
| Midshipman | Aeolus | Capt. Lord Townshend | American Station | 5 July 1811 | 15 Nov. 1811 |
| " | Spartan. | Capt. Ed. Brenton | | 17 Nov. 1811 | 1812 |
| Super-numerary | Royal William | Capt. Fowke. | Spithead | 1812 | 25 Dec. 1812 |
| LIEUTENANT FOR RANK | | | | | |
| Lieut. | Espiegle | Capt. John Taylor | W. Indies | 12 Jan. 1813 | 17 April 1813 |
| " | Newcastle | Capt. Lord Stuart | American Station | 31 Jan. 1814 | 16 Feb. 1815 |
| COMMANDER FOR RANK | | | | | |
| Commander | Beaver | Self | St. Helena | 13 June 1820 | 13 June 1815 |
| " | Rosario | " | Portsmouth | 7 July 1821 | — |
| " | Larne | " | E. Indies | 31 Mar. 1823 | — |
| " | Tees | " | E. Indies | Capt. 25 July 1825 | — |
| [Captain | Ariadne | " | Western Isles | 10 Nov. 1828 | 9 Nov. 1830] |

REFERENCES

Abbreviations : B.M.=British Museum ; P.R.O.=Public Record Office ; N.C.=Naval Chronicle.

GENERAL

Florence Marryat (Mrs. Ross Church), *Life and Letters of Captain Marryat*. 2 vols. 1872.

Since most of Marryat's papers were destroyed after his death this family biography, though heavily 'edited,' remains our chief source of information about his private life.

J. Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography*, Vol. III. 1830. Contains the best summary of Marryat's naval career. Marryat himself read the proofs and the article in O'Byrne's *Dictionary* (1849) is derived from it.

D. Hannay. *Life of Frederick Marryat*. (Great Writers Series) 1889. A well written sketch, but includes no new material.

W. T. Dorling. *Men-o'-War*. (1929). Section on Marryat.

M. Sadleir. *Excursions in Victorian Bibliography*. 1922.

J. Conrad. *Tales of the Sea*. Privately printed in 1919.

The best edition of the Novels and Tales is that edited by R. Brimley Johnson in 1896. All references are to this edition ; many of the quotations in the early part of this book are from *Frank Mildmay*.

Of the general naval histories, that of James, vols. 4, 5, 6, remains invaluable. (1886 edition.) Capt. Chamier wrote most of the last volume. Laird Clowes' *History of the Royal Navy* has also been consulted.

I. LONDON

P.R.O. Adm. 107/44.

N.C. XV.

C. T. Davis. *Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica*. 1909.
Notes and Queries. Series VII, vol. 7. 294.

S. M. Ellis. *Mainly Victorian*. 1924.

Athenæum. May 18th, 1889.

Temple Bar. March, 1873.

Annual Register. 1824.

Masterman Ready. Chap. 5.

King's Own. 162.

CAPTAIN MARRYAT AND THE OLD NAVY

II. THE MIDSHIPMAN'S BERTH.

- B.M. Add. MSS. 38241f. 291. Cruikshank Coll. c.200. b.51.
C. N. Robinson. *British Tar in Fact and Fiction*. 1909.
J. Masfield. *Sea Life in Nelson's Time*. 1905.
N.C. XXII 18. XXIV 410.
W. N. Glascock. *Naval Sketch Book*. 1834. Vol. I. 142.
F. Chamier. *The Life of a Sailor*. 1831.
Raigersfeld. *Life of a Sea Officer*. 1830. (Ed. Manwaring 1929.)
King's Own. 47
Percival Keene. 339.
Peter Simple. 75.
Midshipman Easy. Chap. 28.
E. Howard. *Rattlin the Reefer*. 1836.

III. OFF THE FRENCH COAST.

- P.R.O. Adm. 37/1457. 51/2462.
Cochrane. *Autobiography of a Seaman*. 1860. passim.
N.C. XVII. 167.
Newton Forster. 183.
Peter Simple. Chap. 15.

IV. THE MEDITERRANEAN.

- Mahan. *Sea Power and the French Revolution*. 1892. Vol. II. 118.
Clark Russell. *Life of Collingwood*. 1901. 219,263.
Cochrane. op. cit.
Marryat. *Suggestions for the Abolition of Impressment*.
Memoir of Sir J. Brenton. 1855. 215.
Midshipman Easy. Chap. 29.
King's Own. 212-223.

V. OFF THE COAST OF SPAIN.

- C. R. Pemberton. *Pel Verjuice*. Ed. 1929. 227.
Clark Russell, op. cit. 239.
Cochrane, op. cit.
Brenton, op. cit. 236.
N.C. XXII. 285.

VI. THE BATTLE IN THE AIX ROADS.

- P.R.O. 51/2462.
N.C. XXI. XXII passim.
Cochrane, op. cit.
W. Richardson. *A Mariner of England*. Ed. 1908.
Lady Chatterton. *Memorials of Gambier*. 1862. Vol. II. 95-164.
306-387.

REFERENCES

VII. WALCHEREN.

- N.C. XXII 210. 243.
 Navy Records Society. *Naval Miscellany* II. 1910.
 Sir Julian Corbett in *Quarterly Review*. 1922.
 Sir Chartres Biron. *Pious Opinions*. 1923.
 Richardson, op. cit.
 Chamier, op. cit.
 Marshall. *Naval Biography*. III. ii. 99.
Naval and Military Magazine. 1823. 495.

VIII. THE MEDITERRANEAN FLEET.

- Collingwood. *Memoirs and Correspondence*. 1837. II. 402 ;
 406 ; 379.
 Halévy. *History of the English People*. Vol. I. 93.
 C. Napier. *The Navy*. 1851.
Peter Simple. Chap. 16.
 Pemberton, op. cit. 212-215.
 Chamier, op. cit.
 C. N. Parkinson. *Life of Exmouth*. 1934. 413.

IX. THE AMERICAN WAR. I.

- James. *Naval Occurrences of the Last War*. 1817.
 Mahan. *The War of 1812*. 1905. Vol. I. 149, 300, 385.
 N.C. XXVI. 81, 84. XXVIII. 258. XXIX. 14.
 E. P. Brenton. *Naval History*. 1823. Vols. IV. 558. V. 44.
 D. W. Knox. *History of the U.S. Navy*. 1936. 84.
Peter Simple. Chaps. 29, 30.

X. THE AMERICAN WAR. II.

- P.R.O. Adm. 107/44. 1/3023. Lts.M.478. 1/5441. 53/474.
 N.C. XXVIII. 334. XXIX. 85. XXXIII. 429. XXXVI.
 37,296.
 C. T. Davis, op. cit.
 Knox, op. cit. 93.
 James. *Occurrences*. 199 and Appendix.
Peter Simple. Chap. 38.
 Mahan, op. cit. II. 201, 330, 352.
 Chamier, op. cit. 178-184.
 Marryat. *Abolition of Impressment*.
 Marshall. *Naval Biography*. II. ii. 534, 573.
Times Lit. Sup. May 7th, 1938.

CAPTAIN MARRYAT AND THE OLD NAVY

XI. SIGNALS AND THE PRESS GANG.

- N.C. XXXV 461. XXXVIII 382.
 Marryat. *A Code of Signals*. 1817.
 Marryat. *Suggestions for the Abolition of the Present System of Impressment in the Naval Service*. 1822.
 Napier. *The Navy*. 80, 102.
 Basil Hall. *The Lieutenant*. 1866. 37.
 Cruikshank. *Reid Catalogue*. 786.
 B.M. Add. MSS. 37182 f.217.
 Letter in the possession of E. H. W. Meyerstein, Esq.
 Lloyd's. *A History* by Wright and Fayle. 1928. 243 ff.
 W. G. Perrin. *The Evolution of the Signal Flag*. 1922.
Mariner's Mirror. 1935 (Commander H. P. Mead.)
 Halévy, op. cit. I. 82.
Peter Simple. Chap. 10.
Edinburgh Review. Oct., 1824.

XII. NAPOLEON AND THE SMUGGLERS.

- P.R.O. Adm. 1/1297. A.1076; 1069; 1117.
 Octave Aubry. *St. Helena*. 1937.
 Rosebery. *The Last Phase*.
Lowe Papers. B.M. 20, 161.
Peter Simple. Chaps. 54-62.
Times Lit. Sup. Nov. 16th, 1933.
 Frank Bowen. *H.M. Coastguard*. 1928.
 H. N. Shore. *Smuggling Days and Smuggling Ways*. 1892
King's Own. 63.
The Three Cutters, passim.

XIII. THE BURMESE WAR.

- P.R.O. Logs. Adm. 51/3244. 51/3484.
 Marshall. *Royal Naval Biography*. Vol. III.
 Marryat. *Diary on the Continent*. 1840.
 J. J. Snodgrass. *Narrative of the Burmese War*. 1827. (And see review of this in *Quarterly Review*. 1827.)
 de Rhe Philips. *Narrative of the First Burmese War*. 1905.
 F. B. Doveton. *Reminiscences of the Burmese War*. 1852.
 Burma Research Society. Vol. X. 2.
 H. H. Wilson. *Narrative of the Burmese War*. 1852.
 Hon. J. W. Fortescue. *History of the British Army*. Vol. XI.
 C. R. Low. *History of the Indian Navy*. 1877. Vol. I. 412.
 Newton Forster. 307.

REFERENCES

XIV. THE LAST COMMAND.

- B.M. Add. MSS. 33, 697 ff. 162-185.
 E. H. W. Meyerstein in *Mariner's Mirror*. July 1935.
 M. Sadleir. Introduction to *Peter Simple*. 1929.
 Florence Marryat. *The Spirit World*. 1894. 24.
Metropolitan Magazine. Vol. VIII.
 S. M. Ellis. *Life of Ainsworth*. 1911. Vol. I. 189.
The King's Own. Chap. 14.
Percival Keene. 344.
Midshipman Easy. Chap. 21.
Newton Forster. Chap. I.

XV. THE NOVELIST.

- B. M. Add. MSS. 31,978 f. 260.
 Letters in the possession of the author and E. H. W. Meyerstein.
 See *The Times*. Sept. 10th, 1936.
 M. Sadleir. *Blessington D'Orsay*, 1933. 231-239.
 M. Sadleir. Introduction to edition of *Peter Simple*. 1929.
 J. N. Neale. *Will Watch*. 1834. Appendix to Vol. 3. I am indebted for this reference to D. Bonner Smith, Esq.
 H. A. Beers. *Life of N. P. Willis*. 1885. 197 ff.
 E. A. Poe. *Collected Works*. 1902. Vol. VII. 168.
Fraser's Magazine. May, 1838.
 Forster. *Life of Dickens*. Book VI, section 6. V, section 4.
 S. M. Ellis. *Life of Ainsworth*. Vol. II. 120.
 R. H. Horne. *New Spirit of the Age*. 1844.
 G. Saintsbury. *A Scrap Book*. 1922.
 Dickens. *Letters*. Vol. III. 240.

INDEX

A

Æolus, 140-144, 147
Africa, 137, 146
Ainsworth, Harrison, 247, 253, 255, 273
Aix Roads battle, 86 ff.
Allemand, Adm., 86 ff.
Almeria, 59
Andaman Islands, 210-212
Angerstein, 177
Antwerp, 115
Amherst, Lord, 208
Arcachon, 41
Ariadne, 239-249
Articles of War, 130
Atalanta, 43
Atlas, 136
Auckland, Lord, 274
Austen, Jane, 239
Ava. See Burma
Avenger, 275
Azores, 242

B

Babbage, C., 8, 176
Barbadoes, 163
Barcelona, 66 ff.
Barham, Lord, 113
Barker, Capt., 131, 176
Basque Roads. See Aix Roads
Bassein, 226-230
Bath, Order of, 233
Bellerophon, 91
Beaver, 189-195
Bermuda, 139-140
Bligh, Capt. J., 105
Blessington, Lady, 255, 260
Boston, 169, 265
Brenton, Ed. Pelham, 145-148
Brenton, Capt. J., 53, 71
Brighton, 234, 274
Britannia, 34, 269
Broke, Capt. See *Shannon*
Burdett, Sir F., 45, 113
Burma, 206-233
Byron, Lord 11

C

Cadaques, 80
Cæsar, 90, 107
Calcutta, 90, 106
Caledonia. See Gambier
Caulfield, Lt., 59
Campbell, Sir Archibald, 209-231
Campbell, T., 252
Canning, G., 148
Canada, rebellion of Lower, 266
Caroline, 265
Centaur, 124-130
Chamier, F., 23, 120, 124, 168, 238, 252, 277
Chads, Capt., 230, 274
Chatham, Earl of, 117 ff.
Cheetham, J., 196-199
Chesapeake, 165
Children of the New Forest, 273
Chubb, 140
Cincinnati, 167, 265
Cobbett, Henry, 47, 61
Cobbett, William, 37, 113, 120
Cochrane, Sir A., 165
Cochrane, Lord, 11-115 *passim*
Colburn, H., 238, 272
Collingwood, Adm., 49-54, 84, 125-127, 248
Colomb's Code, 180
Congreve, W., 70 ; in *Etna*, 90, 98, 105
Conrad, J., xi, xiii
Constitution, 146, 147, 170
Continental Blockade, 50
Corfu, 57
Corsica. Capture of the *King George*, 55
Cotton, Sir Charles, 126
Croker, J. W., 173
Cruikshank, G., 23, 131, 174, 175

D

Danubyu, 225
Dala, 222
Davis, J., 238, 244
Deçrès, 116
Demerara, 160

INDEX

Diana, 210
Diary on the Continent, 215
 Dickens, Charles, 253, 255, 261, 263,
 268, 271
 D'Orsay, Count, 255
 Duhesme, General, 67
 Duncan, Hon. H., 124

E

Espiegle, 152-164
Etna. See Congreve
 Exmouth, Lord, 135

F

Fame (Capt. West), 73-79
 Flogging, 129-134, 256
Floral Telegraph, 181
 Flushing, 118
 Foote, Adm., 154
 Forster, J., 255, 261, 272
Fraser's Magazine, 238, 252, 267

G

Gambier, Adm., 49, 86 ff.
 Garth, Capt., 115, 120
 George IV, 190
 Ghent, Treaty of, 171
 Gianbelli, 95
 Gibraltar, 63
Gladiator, 150, 153
 Glascock, Capt., 14, 252, 260
 Glenelg, Lord, 266
 Goya, 68
 Graham, Sir James, 187
 Grant, Commodore, 209, 212, 214, 218
 Grenville, Sir R., 65
Guerriere, 143

H

Hall, Capt. B., 173, 176
 Halifax, 140, 142, 164
Harlequin, 15
 Harvey, Sir Eliab, 94
 Haycock's Harbour, 148
 Hawke, Lord, 91
 Hendry, Capt., 195-198
 Hill, Rowland, 251
 Hood, Sir Samuel, 124, 130
 Hook, Theodore, 234
Hornet, 153, 160
 Howard, Hon. E., 6, 24, 45, 252
 Hume, J., 132

I

Ibbetson, P., 194
Ida, 167
Imperieuse, 15 ff.
 Impressment, 132, 165, 181-188, 256
Indefatigable, 20, 109
Indian, 149
Indienne, 102
 Irving, Washington, 247

J

Jack Nasty Face, 129
 Jackson, G. V., 254
Japhet in search of a father, 253, 263
 Johnson, Urry, 75, 96
Joseph Rushbrook, 267

K

Keats, Commodore, 40, 43
 Kemmendine, 218-219
 Keppel, Hon. T., 239, 244
 Kingsley, H., 135
King's Own, The, 17, 61, 129, 201, 233,
 237; publication of, 240-243, 247

L

Langham, 247, 269-275
 Languedoc, 70
Larne, 208-231
 Lausanne, 261
Leander, 164, 170
Liffey, 208-212
 Lieutenant's Examination, 3, 150-152
 Lillo, Fort, 119
Little Belt, 142
 Little River, 148
Little Savage, 273
 Lloyd's, 6, 11, 176-180
 Lowe, Sir Hudson, 191-195
 Lyon, Lieut., 174

M

Macready, W. C., 271
 Madeira, 171, 243
 Madras, 209
Magnificent, 34
 Maitland, Capt., 91, 112
 Malta, 53, 134. See Prize Courts
 Mapleton, Lieut., 71
 Marryat, Catharine (wife), 175, 262
 „ Charlotte, (mother), 7, 266
 „ Florence (daughter), 277
 „ Frank (son), 240, 269, 273

INDEX

Marryat, Frederick (son), 189, 240,
 249, 275
 „ Joseph (father), 4-12, 176-180
 „ Joseph (brother), 7, 266
 „ Samuel (uncle), 4, 247
 „ Thomas (grandfather), 5
 „ William (son), 209, 233
 Marshall, J., 187, 277
Masterman Ready, 9, 268
 Maurice, F. D., 257
Mediator, 96, 101, 102
 Melville, Lord, 173
Metropolitan Magazine, 46, 252
Midshipman Easy, 28, 47, 55, 67, 135,
 237, 244 ; publication of 261-263
 Miguel, Don, 242
Mildmay, Frank, 23, 41, 47, 61, 77, 102,
 134, 150, 153 ; publication of,
 235-239
 Mongat, Castle of, 69
 Montreal, 266
 Moore, Lieut., 217
 More, Hannah, 113
 Morris, H. L., 20
 Mowbray, T., 136
 Mulgrave, Lord, 85, 87

N

Namur, 136
 Napier, Sir Charles, 127, 186, 187
 Napier, Hon. W., 37, 55
 Napoleon, 48, 58, 93, 113, 116 ; death
 of, 191-195
Naval Officer, The. See *Mildmay*
 Neale, J. Nelson, 258-260
 Nelson, H., 1, 2, 9, 135, 182
Newcastle, 164-171
Newton Forster, 189, 248, 252

O

O'Brien, Adm., 254
Ocean. See Collingwood and Allemand
Ocean Waif, The, 264
Olla Podrida, 201
 O'Meara, Barry, 113, 156
 Otley, Saunders and, 257

P

Pallas, 14, 98, 109
 Palos, Cape, 58
 Parker, Sir Peter, 28
Peacock, 160
 Pemberton, C. R., 65, 133
 Pepys, Samuel, 4, 149
Percival Keene, 19, 236, 267

Peter Simple, 17, 24, 28, 34, 37, 41, 139,
 150, 185, 196 ; publication of,
 248-253
Phantom Ship, 267
 Pierce, Capt., 167, 265
Pirate, The, 263
 Poe, E. A., 267
 Ponder's End (Holmwood) School,
 1, 7-9
Poor Jack, 254, 267
 Popham, Sir Home, 177, 178
 Portsmouth, R. N. C., 11
President, 143
 Press Gang. See Impressment
Prince de Neufchatel, 167
Privateersman, 273
 Prize Money and Courts, 19, 56

R

Raigersfeld, Adm., 25
 Rangoon, 207-231
Rattlin the Reefer. See Howard
 Richardson, Wm., 92, 97, 108, 120
 Ritchie, J., 174
 Rochefort, 40. And see Aix Roads
 Rodgers, Commodore, 143
 Rosas, 73-80, 84
Rosario, 195-205
Royal George, 267
 Royal Humane Society, 164

S

St. Helena, 191-195
 St. Vincent, Lord, 145, 147
 Sale, Major, 225
Samuel Smith, 244-246
 Sawyer, Adm., 137, 145, 146
 Scott, Michael, 147
 Scott, Sir Walter, 84, 173
 Selda, Port, 82
Settlers in Canada, 273
Shannon, 147, 165
 Shrapnel shells, 120
 Shwe Dagon, 213
 Signal Code, 176-181
 Simpson, J., 250
 Skene, Capt. A., 46
 Skinner, Mrs., 233
 Slavery, abolition of, 256
 Small, J., 163
 Smollett, T., 16, 35
 Smuggling, 199-205
Snarleywow, 29, 129, 201, 263
Spartan. See Brenton
Speedy, 13
 Stanfield, Clarkson, 272

INDEX

Stewart Houston, 38, 76, 81, 120
 Stewart, Mrs., 269, 272
 Stirling, Adm., 155
 Stopford, Adm., 86
 Strachan, Sir Richard, 117, 119
 Stuart, Lord George. See Newcastle
 Sussex, Duke of, 235, 248
Swiss Family Robinson, 268
 Sydenham, 4, 5, 45
 Syriam, 221

T

Taylor, Capt. J. See *Espiegle*
Tees, 208, 230
Theseus, 108
Three Cutters, 201, 263
Tonnerre, 104
 Toronto, 265
 Torpedoe, early example, 120
 Tower Hamlets, 256
 Townshend, Lord James. See *Æolus*
 Travers, Lieut., 118
 Trinidad, Castle of. See Rosas
 Tristan d'Acunha, 190

U

Urquhart, T., 179, 182

V

Valerie, 274
 Vendres, Port, 72
Victorious, 122
Victory, 1
Vigo, 192
Ville de Paris. See Collingwood

W

Walcheren, 115 ff.
 Walker, J., 137
 Warren, Sir Borlase, 145, 146
 Westminster, Borough of, 45
 Westminster, Great George Street,
 Whitshed, Sir J., 198
 Williams' Circulating Library, 3
 William IV, 187, 234
 Willaumez, 86
 Willis, N. P., 260

Y

Yellow Fever, 138
 Young, G. M., 254
 Young, Sir W. (Sir Hurricane Hum
 bug), 30
Young Naval Hero, The, 20

